"THE DEATH DIAMONDS," BY EMMA HOWARD WIGHT, NEXT WEEK.

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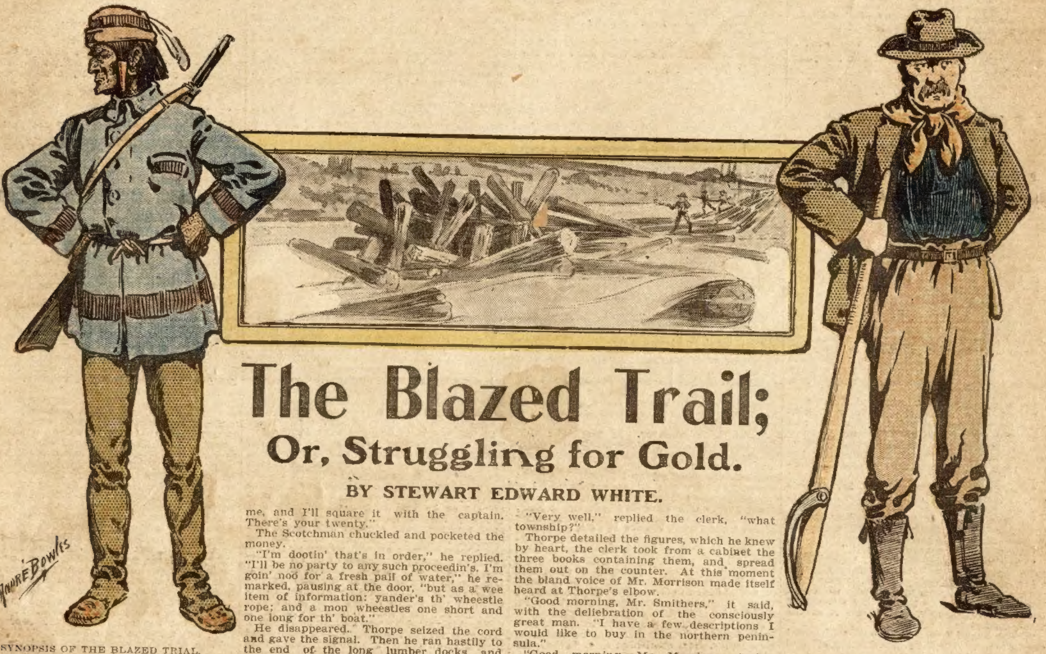

The Blazed Trail;

Or, Struggling for Gold.

BY STEWART EDWARD WHITE.

SYNOPSIS OF THE BLAZED TRIAL.

[John Radway, a lumberman, makes a contract with Morrison & Daly, a big lumber firm, to cut certain timber in northern Michigan; the contract was a tricky document, the exact terms of which were impossible to fulfill. When Radway attempted to collect his money the contract was shown, and he was on the verge of bankruptcy when he was saved by the good business tact of an employe, Harry Thorpe, who forced the lumber firm to settle. Thorpe was a young man who had been suddenly thrown upon his own resources by family misfortunes, and who had decided to try his luck in the northern woods as a logger. After the Radway deal was settled up Thorpe decided to try a deal on his own hook. He located a great claim on the shores of Lake Superior. While locating the claim he met a friendly Indian and a rich young man who was in the North fishing. A big firm was stealing the lumber in that region, and when they learned Thorpe was there to locate a claim they started a man to Detroit to register their right to it, and Thorpe started out for the same purpose.]

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CHAPTER XIV.

PUTTING UP A BLUFF.

Thorpe arrived out of breath at a typical little mill town consisting of the usual unpainted houses, the saloons, mill, office, and general store. To the latter he addressed himself for information.

The proprietor, still sleepy, was mopping out the place.

"Does that boat stop here?" shouted Thorpe across the suds.

"Sometimes," replied the man, somnolently.

"Not always?"

"Only when there's freight for her."

"How does she know when there's freight?"

"Oh, they signal her from the mill"—but Thorpe was gone.

At the mill Thorpe dove for the engine room. He knew that elsewhere the clang of machinery and the hurry of business would leave scant attention for him. And besides, from the engine room the signals would be given. He found a Scotchman in charge.

"Does the boat stop here this morning?" he inquired.

"Weel," replied the engineer with fearful deliberation, "I canna say. But I hae received na orders to that effect."

"Can't you whistle her in for me?" asked Thorpe.

"I canna," answered the engineer, promptly enough this time.

"Why not?"

"Ye're na what a body might call freight."

"See here," replied Thorpe, "I've got to get that boat. It's worth twenty dollars to me, and I'll square it with the captain. There's your twenty."

The Scotchman chuckled and pocketed the money.

"I'm dootin' that's in order," he replied. "I'll be no party to any such proceedin's. I'm goin' noo for a fresh pail of water," he remarked, pausing at the door, "but as a wee item of information: yander's th' wheestle rope; and a mon wheestles one short and one long for th' boat."

He disappeared. Thorpe seized the cord and gave the signal. Then he ran hastily to the end of the long lumber docks and peered with great eagerness in the direction of the black smoke.

The steamer was as yet concealed behind a low spit of land which ran out from the west to form one side of the harbor. In a moment, however, her bow appeared, headed directly down towards the Straits of Mackinaw. When opposite the little bay with a grand free sweep she turned and headed directly for him.

He negotiated briefly with the captain, paid twenty dollars more for speed and the privilege of landing at Mackinaw City. Then he slept for eight hours on end and was awakened in time to drop into a small boat which deposited him on the broad sand beach of the lower peninsula.

The train was just leisurely making up for departure. Thorpe, dressed as he was in old "pepper and salt" garments patched with buckskin, his hat a flopping travesty on headgear, his moccasins worn and dirty, his face bearded and bronzed, tried as much as possible to avoid attention. He sent an instant telegram to Wallace Carpenter conceived as follows:

"Wire thirty thousand my order care Land Office, Detroit, before nine o'clock tomorrow morning. Do it if you have to rustle all night. Important."

Morning came at last, and the train drew into the depot at Detroit, and stopped. Thorpe, being in the smoking car, dropped off first and stationed himself near the exit where he could look over the passengers without being seen. They filed past; to two only he could accord the role of master lumbermen, and in these two Thorpe recognized Daly and Morrison themselves. They passed within ten feet of him, talking earnestly together. At the curb they hailed a cab and drove away. Thorpe with satisfaction heard them call the name of a hotel.

At nine o'clock neither of the partners had appeared. Thorpe entered the land office and approached the desk.

"Is there a telegram here for Harry Thorpe?" he inquired.

The clerk to whom he addressed himself merely motioned with his head toward a young fellow behind the railing in a corner. The latter, without awaiting the question, shifted comfortably and replied:

"No."

At the same instant steps were heard in the corridor, the door opened, and Mr. Morrison appeared on the sill. Then Thorpe showed the stuff of which he was made.

"Is this the desk for buying Government lands?" he asked, hurriedly.

"Yes," replied the clerk.

"I have some descriptions I wish to buy in,"

"Very well," replied the clerk, "what township?"

Thorpe detailed the figures, which he knew by heart, the clerk took from a cabinet the three books containing them, and spread them out on the counter. At this moment the bland voice of Mr. Morrison made itself heard at Thorpe's elbow.

"Good morning, Mr. Smithers," it said, with the deliebration of the consciously great man. "I have a few descriptions I would like to buy in the northern peninsula."

"Good morning, Mr. Morrison. Archie there will attend to you. Archie, see what Mr. Morrison wishes."

The lumberman and the other clerk consulted in a low voice, after which the official turned to fumble among the records. Not finding what he wanted, he approached Smithers. A whispered consultation ensued between these two. Then Smithers called:

"Take a seat, Mr. Morrison. This gentleman is looking over these townships, and will have finished in a few moments."

Morrison's eye suddenly became uneasy.

"I am somewhat busy this morning," he objected, with a shade of command in his voice.

"If this gentleman?" suggested the clerk, delicately.

"I am sorry," put in Thorpe, with brevity, "my time, too, is valuable."

Morrison looked at him sharply.

"My deal is a big one," he snapped. "I can probably arrange with this gentleman to let him have his farm."

"I claim precedence," replied Thorpe, calmly.

"You will have to await your turn, Mr. Morrison," said the clerk, virtuous before so many witnesses.

The business man was in a white rage of excitement.

"I insist on my application being filed at once!" he cried, waving his check. "I have the money right here to pay for every acre of it; and if I know the law, the first man to pay takes the land."

He slapped the check down on the rail, and hit it a number of times with the flat of his hand. Thorpe turned and faced him with a steel look in his level eyes.

"Mr. Morrison," he said, "you are quite right. The first man who pays gets the land; but I have won the first chance to pay. You will kindly step one side until I finish my business with Mr. Smithers here."

"I suppose you have the amount actually with you?" said the clerk, quite respectfully; "because if you have not, Mr. Morrison's claim will take precedence."

"I would hardly have any business in a land office if I did not know that," replied Thorpe, and began his dictation of the description as calmly as though his inside pocket contained the required amount in bank bills.

Thorpe's hopes had sunk to zero. After all, looking at the matter dispassionately, why should he expect Carpenter to trust him, a stranger, with so large a sum? It had been madness. Only the blind confidence of the fighting man led him further into the struggle.

The clerk marked across each square of his map as Thorpe read them, the date and the purchaser's name.

At length the task was finished. It became necessary to type duplicate lists of the descriptions. While the somnolent youth finished his task, Thorpe listened for the messenger boy on the stairs.

A faint slam was heard outside the rickety old building. Hasty steps sounded along the corridor. The landlooker merely stopped the drumming of his fingers on the broad arm of the chair. The door flew open and Wallace Carpenter walked quickly to him.

Thorpe's face lighted up as he rose to greet his partner. The boy had not forgotten their compact after all.

"Then it's all right?" queried the latter breathlessly.

"Sure," answered Thorpe, heartily, "got 'em in good shape."

At the same time he was drawing the youth beyond the vigilant watchfulness of Mr. Morrison.

"You're just in time," he said, in an undertone. "Never had so close a squeak. I suppose you have cash or a certified check; that's all they'll take here."

"What do you mean?" asked Carpenter, blankly.

"Haven't you that money?" returned Thorpe, quick as a hawk.

"For Heaven's sawe, isn't it here!" cried Wallace, in consternation. "I wired Duncan, my banker, here last night, and received a reply from him. He answered that he'd see to it. Haven't you seen him?"

"No," repeated Thorpe, in his turn.

"What can we do?"

"Can you get your check certified here near at hand?"

"Yes."

"Well, go do it. And get a move on you. You have precisely until that boy there finishes ticking that machine. Not a second longer."

"Can't you get them to wait a few minutes?"

"Wallace," said Thorpe, "do you see that white-whiskered old lynx in the corner. That's Morrison, the man who wants to get our land. If I fail to plank down the cash the very instant it is demanded, he gets his chance. And he'll take it. Now, go. Don't hurry until you get beyond the door; then fly!"

Thorpe sat down again in his broad-armed chair and resumed his drumming. The nearest bank was six blocks away. He counted over in his mind the steps of Carpenter's progress; now to the door, now in the next block, now so far beyond. He had just escorted him to the door of the bank, when the clerk's voice broke in on him.

"Now," Smithers was saying, "I'll give

you a receipt for the amount, and later will send to your address the title deeds of the descriptions."

Carpenter had yet to find the proper official, to identify himself, to certify the checks, and return. It was hopeless. Thorpe dropped his hands in surrender.

Then he saw the boy lay two typed lists before his principal, and dimly he perceived that the youth, shamefacedly, was holding something bulky toward himself.

"Wh—what is it?" he stammered, drawing his hand back as though from red-hot iron.

"You asked for a telegram," said the boy, stubbornly, as though trying to excuse himself, "and I didn't just catch the name, anyway. When I saw it on those lists I had to copy, I thought of this here."

"Where'd you get it?" asked Thorpe, breathlessly.

"A fellow came here early and left it for you while I was sweeping out," explained the boy. "Said he had to catch a train. It's yours all right, ain't it?"

"Oh, yes," replied Thorpe.

He took the envelope and walked uncertainly to the tall window. He looked out at the chimneys. After a moment he tore open the envelope.

"I hope there's no bad news, sir," said the clerk, startled at the paleness of the face Thorpe turned to the desk.

"No," replied the landlooker. "Give me a receipt. There's a certified check for your money."

CHAPTER XV.

DEFIANCE.

Next day the articles of partnership were drawn; and Carpenter gave his note for the necessary expenses. Then in answer to a penciled card which Mr. Morrison had evidently left at Thorpe's hotel in person, both young men called at the lumberman's place of business. They were ushered immediately into the private office.

Mr. Morrison was a smart little man with an ingratiating manner and a fishy eye. He greeted Thorpe with marked geniality.

"My opponent of yesterday," he cried, jocularly. "Sit down, Mr. Thorpe! Although you did me out of some land I had made every preparation to purchase, I can't but admire your grit and resourcefulness. How did you get here ahead of us?"

"I walked across the upper peninsula and caught a boat," replied Thorpe, briefly.

"Indeed, indeed!" replied Mr. Morrison, placing the tips of his fingers together. "Extraordinary! Well, Mr. Thorpe, you overreached us nicely; and I suppose we must pay for our carelessness. We must have that pine, even though we pay stumpage on it. Now, what would you consider a fair price for it?"

"It is not for sale," answered Thorpe.

"We'll waive all that. Of course it is to your interest to make difficulties and run the price up as high as you can. But my time is somewhat occupied just at present, so I would be very glad to hear your top price; we will come to an agreement afterwards."

"You do not understand me, Mr. Morrison. I told you the pine is not for sale, and I mean it."

"But surely—what did you buy it for, then?" cried Mr. Morrison, with evidences of a growing excitement.

"We intend to manufacture it."

"Very well," cried Morrison, so suddenly in a passion that Wallace started. "It's war! And let me tell you this, young man, you're a new concern and we're an old one. We'll crush you like that!" He crisped an envelope vindictively, and threw it in the waste-basket.

"Crush ahead," replied Thorpe, with great good humor. "Good-by, Mr. Morrison," and the two went out.

Wallace was sputtering and trembling with nervous excitement. His was one of those temperaments which required action to relieve the stress of a stormy interview. He wanted to do something at once. "Hadn't we better see a lawyer?" he asked. "Oughtn't we to look out that they don't take some of our pine? Oughtn't we——"

"You just leave all that to me," replied Thorpe. "The first thing we want to do is to rustle some money."

"And you can leave that to me!" echoed Wallace. "I know a little of such things, and I have business connections who know more. You just get the camp running."

"I'll start for Bay City tonight," submitted Thorpe. "There ought to be a good lot of lumberjacks lying around idle at this time of year; and it's a good place to outfit from because we can probably get freight rates direct by boat. We'll be a little late in starting, but we'll get in some logs this winter, anyway."

CHAPTER XVI.

Now, in August, however, the first turmoil had died. The "jam" had boiled into town, "taken it apart," and left the inhabitants to piece it together again as they could; the "rear" had not yet arrived. As a consequence, Thorpe found the city comparatively quiet.

Although his ideas were not as yet formulated, he hoped to be able to pick up a crew of first-class men from those who had come down with the advance, or "jam," of the spring's drive. They should have finished their orgies by now, and, empty of pocket, should be found hanging about the boarding houses and the quieter saloons. Thorpe intended to offer good wages for good men. He would not need more than twenty at first, for during the approaching winter he intended to log on a very small scale, indeed. The time for expansion would come later.

With this object in view he set out from his hotel about half-past seven on the day of his arrival, to cruise about in the lumberjack district. The hotel clerk had obligingly given him the names of a number of the quieter saloons, where the boys "hung out" between bursts of prosperity. In the first of these Thorpe was helped materially in his vague and uncertain quest by encountering an old acquaintance.

"That you, Shearer?" inquired Thorpe, advancing. "You're the man I'm looking for."

"You've found me," replied the old man, dryly.

Thorpe was requested elaborately to "shake hands" with the owners of six names. Then he had a chance to intimate quietly to Shearer that he wanted a word with him alone. The river man rose silently and led the way up the straight, uncarpeted stairs, along a narrow, uncarpeted hall, to a square, uncarpeted bed room. The walls and ceilings of this apartment were of unpainted planed pine. It contained a cheap bureau, one chair, and a bed and washstand to match the bureau. Shearer lit the lamp and sat on the bed.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I have a little pine up in the northern peninsula, within walking distance of Marquette," said Thorpe, and I want to get a crew of about twenty men. It occurred to me that you might be willing to help me."

The riverman frowned steadily at his interlocutor from under his bushy brows.

"How much pine you got?" he asked, finally.

"About three hundred million," replied Thorpe, quietly.

The old man's blue eyes fixed themselves with unwavering steadiness on Thorpe's face.

"You're jobbing some of it, eh?" he submitted finally as the only probable conclusion. "Do you think you know enough about it? Who does it belong to?"

"It belongs to a man named Carpenter and myself."

The riverman pondered this slowly for an appreciable interval, and then shot out another question.

"How'd you get it?"

Thorpe told him simply, omitting nothing except the name of the firm up-river. When he had finished, Shearer evinced no astonishment nor approval.

"You done well," he commented, finally. Then after another interval:

"Have you found out who was the men stealin' the pine?"

"Yes," replied Thorpe, quietly; "it was Morrison & Daly."

The old man flickered not an eyelid. He slowly filled the pipe and lit it.

"I'll get you a crew of men," said he, "if you'll take me as foreman."

"But it's a little job at first," protested Thorpe. "I only want a camp of twenty men. It wouldn't be worth your while."

"That's my look-out. I'll take the job," replied the logger, grimly. "You got three hundred million there, ain't you? And you're goin' to cut it? It ain't such a small job."

Thorpe could hardly believe his good fortune in having gained so important a recruit. With a practical man as foreman, his mind would be relieved of a great deal of worry over unfamiliar detail. He saw at once that he would himself be able to perform all the duties of scaler, keep in touch with the needs of the camp, and supervise the campaign. Nevertheless, he answered the older man's glance with one as keen, and said:

"Look here, Shearer. If you take this job, we may as well understand each other at the start. This is going to be my camp, and I'm going to be boss. I don't know much about logging, and I shall want to know just why you do each thing, and if my judgment advises otherwise, my judgment goes. If I want to discharge a man, he walks without any question. I know about what I shall expect of each man; and I intend to get it out of him. And in questions of policy mine is the say-so every trip. Now, I know you're a good man—one of the best there is—and I presume I shall find your judgment the best, but I don't want any mistakes to start with. If you want to be my foreman on those terms, just say so, and I'll be tickled to death to have you."

For the first time the lumberingman's face lost, during a single instant, its mask of immobility. His steel-blue eyes flashed, his mouth twitched with some strong emotion. For the first time, too, he spoke without contemplative pause of preparation.

"That's the way to talk!" he cried. "Go with you? Well, I should rise to remark! You're the boss; and I always said it. I'll get you a gang of bully boys that will roll logs till there's skating in hell!"

Thorpe left, after making an appointment at his own hotel for the following day, more than pleased with his luck. Deep in his thoughts, he wandered on at random. He suddenly came to himself in the toughest quarter of Bay City.

Through the summer night thrilled the sound of cachinations pointed to the colors of mirth. A cheap piano rattled and thumped through an open window. Men's and women's voices mingled in rising and falling graduations of harshness. Lights streamed irregularly across the dark.

Thorpe became aware of a figure crouched in the doorway almost at his feet. The flickering rays of a distant street lamp threw into relief the high-lights of a violin and a head. The face upturned to him was thin and white and wolfish under a broad white brow. Dark eyes gleamed at him with the expression of a fierce animal. Across the forehead ran a long but shallow cut from which blood dripped. The creature clasped both arms around a violin. He crouched there and stared up at Thorpe, who stared down at him.

"What's the matter?" asked the latter, finally.

The creature made no reply, but drew his arms closer about his instrument. Thorpe made a sign to the unknown to rise.

"Come with me," said he, "and I'll have your forehead attended to."

The eyes gleamed into his with a sudden savage concentration. Then their owner obediently arose.

Thorpe now saw that the body before him was of a cripple, short-legged, hunch-backed, long-armed, pigeon-breasted. The large head sat strangely top-heavy between even the broad shoulders. It confirmed the hopeless but sullen despair that brooded on the white countenance.

At the hotel Thorpe, examining the cut, found it more serious in appearance than in reality. With a few pieces of sticking plaster he drew its edges together.

Then he attempted to interrogate his find.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Phil."

"Phil what?"

Silence.

"How did you get hurt?"

No reply.

"Were you playing your fiddle in one of those houses?"

The cripple nodded slowly.

"Are you hungry?" asked Thorpe, with a sudden thoughtfulness.

"Yes," replied the cripple, with a lightning gleam in his wolf eyes.

Thorpe rang the bell. To the boy who answered it, he said:

"Bring me half a dozen beef sandwiches and a glass of milk and be quick about it."

"Do you play the fiddle much?" continued Thorpe. The cripple nodded again.

"Let's hear what you can do."

"They cut my strings," cried Phil, with a passionate wail.

The cry came from the heart, and Thorpe was touched by it. The price of strings was evidently a big sum.

"I'll get you more in the morning," said he. "Would you like to leave Bay City?"

"Yes!" cried the boy, with passion.

"You would have to work. You would have to be chore-boy in a lumber camp, and play fiddle for the men when they wanted you to."

"I'll do it," said the cripple.

"All right, then I'll take you," replied Thorpe.

The cripple said nothing, nor moved a muscle of his face, but the gleam of the wolf faded to give place to the soft, affectionate glow seen in the eyes of a setter dog. Thorpe was startled at the change.

A knock announced the sandwiches and milk. The cripple fell upon them with both hands in a sudden ecstacy of hunger. When he had finished, he looked again at Thorpe, and this time there were tears in his eyes.

A little later Thorpe interviewed the proprietor of the hotel.

"I wish you'd give this boy a good cheap room and charge his keep to me," said he. He's going north with me."

Thorpe lay awake for some time after retiring. Phil claimed a share of his thought. In an hour or so he dozed. He dreamed that the cripple had grown to enormous proportions and was overshadowing his life. A slight noise outside his bed room door brought him to his feet.

He opened the door and found that in the stillness of the night the poor deformed creature had taken the blankets from his bed and had spread them across the doorsill of the man who had befriended him.

CHAPTER XVII.

A FIGHT.

Three weeks later the steam barge Pole Star sailed down the reach of Saginaw Bay.

Thorpe had received letters from Carpenter advising him of a credit to him at a Marquette bank, and inclosing a draft sufficient for current expenses. Tim Shearer had helped him make out the list of necessaries. In time everything was loaded, the gangplank hauled in, and the little band of Argonauts set their faces toward the point where the Big Dipper swings.

There was not a young man in the lot. They were most of them in the prime of middle life, between thirty and forty, rugged in appearance, "cocky" in manner, with the swagger and the oath of so many buccaneers, hard as nails. Altogether Thorpe thought them about as rough a set of customers as he had ever seen. Throughout the day they played cards on deck, and spat tobacco juice abroad, and swore incessantly. Toward himself and Shearer their manner was an odd mixture of independent equality and a slight deference. It was as much as to say, "You're the boss, but I'm as good a man as you any day."

The truth is, Shearer had managed to inspire in the minds of his cronies an idea that they were about to participate in a fight. He retold Thorpe's story artistically. The men agreed that the "young fellow had sand enough for a lake front." After that there needed but a little skilful maneuvering to inspire them with the idea that it would be a great thing to take a hand, to "make a camp" in spite of the big concern up-river.

The steamboat slid between the yellow waters of two outlying reefs, and, with slackened speed, moved slowly toward the wharf of log cribs filled with stone.

Thorpe knew very well that the structure had been erected by and belonged to Morrison & Daly, but the young man had had the foresight to purchase the land lying on the deep water side of the bay. He therefore anticipated no trouble in unloading; for while Morrison & Daly owned the pier itself, the land on which it abutted belonged to him.

From the arms of the bay he could make out a dozen figures standing near the end of the wharf. When, with propeller reversed, the Pole Star bore slowly down towards her moorings, Thorpe recognized Dyer at the head of eight or ten woodsmen. It looked suspicious.

"Catch this line!" sung out the mate, hurling the coil of a hand-line on the wharf.

No one moved and the little rope, after a moment, slid overboard with a splash.

The captain, with a curse, signalled full speed astern.

"Captain Morse!" cried Dyer, stepping forward; "my orders are that you are to land here nothing but M. & D. merchandise."

"I have a right to land," answered Thorpe. "The shore belongs to me."

"This dock doesn't," retorted the other, sharply, "and you can't set foot on her."

"You have no legal status. You had no business building in the first place——" began Thorpe, and then stopped with a choke of anger at the futility of arguing legality in such a case.

The men had gathered interestedly in the waist of the ship, cool, impartial, severely critical. The vessel swung her bow in towards the dock. Thorpe ran swiftly forward, and during the instant of rubbing contact, leaped.

He alighted squarely upon his feet. Without an instant's hesitation he rushed on Dyer, and with one full, clean in-blow stretched him stunned on the dock. For a moment there was a pause of astonishment. Then the woodsman closed upon him.

Thorpe hit with all his strength and quickness. He was conscious once of being on the point of defeat. Then he had cleared a little space for himself. Then the men were on him again more savagely than ever. One fellow even succeeded in hitting him a glancing blow on the shoulder.

Then came a sudden crash. Thorpe was nearly thrown from his feet. The next instant a score of yelling men leaped behind and all around him. There ensued a moment's scuffle, the sound of dull blows; and the dock was clear of all but Dyer and three others who were, like himself, unconscious. The captain, yielding to the excitement, had run his prow plump against the wharf.

Some of the crew received the mooring lines. All was ready for disembarkation.

Bryan Moloney, a strapping Irish-American of the big-boned, red-cheeked type, threw some water over the four stunned combatants. Slowly they came to life. They were promptly yanked to their feet by the irate rivermen, who commenced at once to bestow sundry vigorous kivks and shakings by way of punishment. Thorpe interposed.

"Quit it!" he commanded; "let them go; we've got to get unloaded and our goods ashore before those fellows report to camp. Get right moving and hustle!"

So Dyer and his men picked themselves out of the trouble sullenly and departed.

With thirty men at the job it does not take a great while to move a small cargo thirty or forty feet. By three o'clock the Pole Star was ready to continue her journey.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TROUBLE BEGINS.

Two months passed away. Winter set in. The camp was built and inhabited. Routine had established itself, and was going well.

The first move of the M. & D. Company had been one of conciliation. Thorpe was approached by the walking boss of the camps up-river. The man did not pretend any hypocritical friendship for the younger firm. His proposition was entirely one of mutual advantage. The company had gone to considerable expense in constructing the pier of stone cribs. It would be impossible for the steamer to land at any other point. Thorpe had undisputed possession of the shore, but the company could as undisputably remove the dock. Let it stay where it was. Both companies could then use it for their mutual convenience. To this Thorpe agreed.

The actual logging was opening up well. Both Shearer and Thorpe agreed that it would not do to be too ambitious the first year. They set about clearing their banking ground about a half mile below the first dam; and during the six weeks before snow fell cut three short roads of half a mile each. Approximately two million feet would be put in from these roads—which could be extended in years to come—while another million could be travoyed directly to the landing from its immediate vicinity.

"Next year," said Tim, "we'll get in twenty million. That railroad'll get along a ways by then, and men'll be more plenty."

The work proceeded finely, and yet the young lumberman had sense enough to know that, while a crew such as this is supremely effective, it requires careful handling to keep it good humored and willing. He knew every man by his first name and each day made it a point to talk with him for a moment or so. The subject was invariably some phase of the work. Thorpe never permitted himself the familiarity of introducing any other topic.

He never replied directly to an objection or a request, but listened to it noncommittally; and later, without explanation or reasoning, acted as his judgment dictated. Even Shearer, with whom he was in most intimate contact, respected this trait in him. Gradually he came to feel that he was making a way with his men. It was a status, not assured as yet nor ever very firm, but a status for all that.

Then one day one of the best men, a teamster, came in to make some objection to the cooking. As a mater of fact, the cooking was perfectly good, but the lumberjack is a great hand to growl, and he usually begins with his food.

Thorpe listened to his vague objections in silence.

"All right," he remarked, simply.

Next day he touched the man on the shoulder just as he was starting to work.

"Step into the office and get your time," said he.

"What's the mater?" asked the man.

"I don't need you any longer."

The two entered the little office. Thorpe looked through the ledger and van book, and finally handed the man his slip.

"I'll have no growlers in this camp," said Thorpe, with decision.

"By God!" cried the man, "you damned—"

"You get out of here!" cried Thorpe, with a concentrated blaze of energetic passion that made the fellow step back.

"I ain't going to get on the wrong side of the law by foolin' with this office," cried the other at the door, "but if I had you outside for a minute——"

"Leave this office!" shouted Thorpe.

"S'pose you make me!" challenged the man, insolently.

In a moment the defiance had come, endangering the careful structure Thorpe had reared with such pains. The young man was suddenly angry in exactly the same blind, unreasoning manner as when he had leaped single-handed to tackle Dyer's crew.

Without a word he sprang across the shack, seized a two-bladed ax from the pile behind the door, swung it around his head and cast it full at the now frightened teamster. The latter dodged, and the swirling steel buried itself in the snowbank beyond. Without an instant's hesitation Thorpe reached back for another. The man took to his heels.

"I don't want to see you around here again!" shouted Thorpe after him.

Then in a moment he returned to the office and sat down overcome with contrition.

"It might have been murder," he told himself, awe-stricken.

But, as it happened, nothing could have turned out better.

Thorpe had instinctively seized the only method by which these strong men could be impressed. Now the entire crew looked with vast admiration on their boss as a man who intended to have his own way no matter what difficulties or consequences might tend to deter him. And that is the kind of man they liked.

Injin Charlie, silent and enigmatical as ever, had constructed a log shack near a little creek in the hardwood. There he attended diligently to the business of trapping. Thorpe rarely found time to visit him, but he often glided into the office, smoked a pipeful of the white man's tobacco in friendly fashion by the stove, and glided out again without having spoken a dozen words.

Wallace made one visit before the big snows came, and was charmed. He ate with gusto of the "salt horse," baked beans, stewed prunes, mince pie and cakes. He tramped around gaily in his moccasins or on the fancy snowshoes he promptly purchased of Indian Charlie. There was nothing new to report in regard to financial matters. The loan had been negotiated easily on the basis of a mortgage guaranteed by Carpenter's personal signature. Nothing had been heard from Morrison & Daly.

By the end of the winter some four million feet of logs were piled in the bed or upon the banks of the stream. To understand what that means, you must imagine a pile of solid timber a mile in length. This tremendous mass lay directly in the course of the stream. When the winter broke up, it had to be separated and floated piecemeal down the current. The process is an interesting and dangerous one, and one of great delicacy. It requires for its successful completion picked men of skill, and demands as toll its yearly quota of cripples and dead. While on the drive men work fourteen hours a day, up to their waists in water filled with floating ice.

On the Ossawinamakee, as has been stated, three dams had been erected to simplify the process of driving. When the logs were in right distribution, the gates were raised, and the proper head of water floated them down.

Now, the river being navigable, Thorpe was possessed of certain rights on it. Technically he was entitled to normal head of water, whenever he needed it; or a special head, according to agreement with the parties owning the dam. Early in the drive, he found that Morrison & Daly intended to cause him trouble. It began in a narrows of the river between high, rocky banks. Thorpe's driver was floating through close-packed. The situation was ticklish. Men with spiked boots ran here and there from one bobbing log to another, pushing with their peaveys, hurrying one log, retarding another, working like beavers to keep the whole mass straight. The entire surface of the water was practically covered with the floating timbers.

In a moment, as though by magic, the loose wooden carpet ground together. A log in advance up-ended; another thrust under it. The whole mass ground together, stopped and began rapidly to pile up. The men escaped to the shore in a marvelous manner of their own.

Tim Shearer found that the gate at the dam above had been closed. The man in charge had simply obeyed orders. He supposed M. & D. wished to back up the water for their own logs.

Tim indulged in some picturesque language.

"You ain't got no right to close off more'n enough to leave us th' nat'ral flow unless by agreement," he concluded, and opened the gates.

Then it was a question of breaking the jam. This had to be done by pulling out or chopping through certain "key" logs which locked the whole mass. Men stood under the face of imminent ruin—over them a frowning sheer wall of bristling logs, behind which pressed the weight of the rising waters—and hacked and tugged calmly until the mass began to stir. Then they escaped. A moment later, with a roar, the jam vomited down on the spot where they had stood. It was dangerous work. Just one half day later it had to be done again, and for the same reason.

This time Thorpe went back with Shearer. No one was at the dam, but the gates were closed. The two opened them again.

That very evening a man rode up on horseback inquiring for Mr. Thorpe.

"I am he," said the young fellow.

The man thereupon dismounted and served a paper. It proved to be an injunction issued by Judge Sherman enjoining Thorpe against interfering with the property of Morrison & Daly—towit, certain dams erected at designated points on the Ossawinamakee. There had not elapsed sufficient time since the commission of the offense for the other firm to secure the issuance of this interesting document, so it was at once evident that the whole affair had been prearranged. After serving the injunction the official rode away.

"Of all the consummate gall!" exploded Thorpe. "Trying to enjoin me from touching a dam when they're refusing me the natural flow! They must have bribed the fool judge. Why, his injunction isn't worth the powder to blow it up!"

"Then you're all right, ain't ye?" inquired Tim.

"It'll be the middle of summer before we get a hearing in court," said he. "Oh, they are a cute layout! They expect to hang me up until it's too late to do anything with the season's cut!"

He arose and began to pace back and forth.

"Tim," said he, "is there a man in the crew who's afraid of nothing and will obey orders?"

"A dozen," replied Tim, promptly.

"Who's the best?"

"Scotty Parsons."

"Ask him to step here."

In a moment the man entered the office.

"Scotty," said Thorpe, "I want you to understand that I stand responsible for whatever I order you to do."

"In the morning," said Thorpe, "you take two men and build some sort of a shack right over the sluice-gate of that second dam. I want you to live there day and night. Never leave it, not even for a minute. The cookee will bring you grub. Take this Winchester. If any of the men from up-river try to go out on the dam, you warn them off. If they persist, you shoot near them. If they keep coming, you shoot at them. Understand?"

"You bet," answered Scotty, with enthusiasm.

Another installment of this truthful and exciting story of life in the logging and lumber trade will be given Ledger readers in next week's Ledger. Every regular subscriber to the Ledger is offered cameras and patterns free as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

The Rose and the Lily.

In the long, long ago, so they tell me,
  In a garden (where, nobody knows),
There grew a sweet, modest, white lily
  And a homely, old-fashioned white rise.

And they both loved the amorous West Wind,
  Just why, I'm sure nobody knows,
And the Wind was in love with the lily
  That grew by the homely white rose.

In the night came the amorous West Wind,
  Confused by the dark, I suppose;
And the kiss that was meant for the lily
  Was pressed on the lips of the rose.

And ever since then, so they tell me,
  Wherever a sweet garden grows,
There's a paleness of grief o'er the lily,
  And a blush on the face of the rose.

MR. STESLER'S DIVERSION

BY CLARA NORTON.

Mr. Stesler sat back after a hearty dinner, grumbling and discontented. He gazed morbidly down the path leading to the road.

"Well, I'm absolutely certain, Bess, that I'd extend both arms to welcome even a burglar or a lunatic in this wretched place."

"You talk foolishly, George. Be thankful that you are on the road to recovery."

"But I say this is a hermit's life."

"Haven't you your cigar and a good digestion?"

"Oh, I know all that. But I want a little change, a little diversion. Why, I tell you," he exclaimed savagely, "if the veriest hoodlum should happen along just now I'd bind him with ropes and leg-irons to make him stay, and apply a hot iron to make him talk."

"Would you really resort to such extremes after a hearty dinner?"

"Oh, the pleasure of that is over—I've eaten it," and he held up his cigar meditatively.

"Well, perhaps, dear, you would enjoy breaking the dishes," suggested Mrs. Stesler mildly. "There are lots of exciting ways for amusement, you know. Indeed, some gentlemen, I believe, find the most divine bliss in the simple experiment of smashing the stove."

"So I've heard," replied her husband.

"And, too, I've heard of an individual with the habit of sawing off the legs of the table."

"I hope he found it diverting."

"Oh, indeed, an enjoyable diversion," she said, toying dreamily with her fork. "He had an inventive genius that was truly marvelous."

"Inventive, how?"

"When he tired of sawing the table he playfully pulled his wife's ears. The ear part, however, was invariably settled in police court."

"A delightful gentleman, certainly."

"Well, at any rate, he rarely complained of ennui." Then she added, after a moment: "Do you fail to find these little suggestions of any use to you?"

"Why, Bess," said he, shamefacedly, "surely I'm no savage. I'm merely longing for a little amusement. Now, for instance, if some one should happen along with a hearty, ringing laugh that you read about in stories, I think I'd find myself more contented."

"Wouldn't a dinner-horn sufficiently arouse you?"

A hurried step on the porch interrupted her remark, and Mr. Stesler fairly jumped out of his chair in eager expectation as a knock sounded on the door. A large, ruddy-faced man loomed in the doorway, and at sight of Mr. Stesler broke into such a roar of laughter that both man and wife turned red and exchanged glances.

"What do you want here, my good man?" demanded Mr. Stesler, becoming exceedingly embarrassed, however, as the stranger held his sides and persisted in his merriment.

Mr. Stesler carefully examined his own shoes, his coat, his sleeve, found his tie all right, then turned a bewildered look of inquiry toward his wife.

"What, in all creation, is the matter?" he broke out finally in loud, ferocious accents. But the stranger still laughed on.

"Is this humorous from your point of view, Bess?" but Mr. Stesler's remark was drowned in the vociferous enjoyment of the man outside.

"Won't you come in?" his wife politely asked, hoping to break the spell, and Mr. Stesler motioned the visitor invitingly to a chair.

The stranger then entered and settled himself in the easy-chair, lighted one of Mr. Stesler's cigars and stretched himself out in more comfort than grace.

"William," said he at last, moving his hand authoritatively toward his host, "William, I should like the morning paper."

"My name, sir, is not William. I am Mr. Stesler—Mr. George Stesler."

"And, William," continued the stranger, totally disregarding the remark, "bring my slippers—slippers and morning paper," and he puffed away at the cigar with most provoking ease.

Mrs. Stesler, somewhat bewildered, was inclined to smile at her husband's discomfiture. The stranger, however, soon addressed her with the same impudent nonchalance.

"And you, Molly darling, bring my coffee and rolls. I'll eat here. And don't forget the flowers; I am very fond of flowers."

"My dear man," exclaimed Mr. Stesler, "are you aware that this lady is my wife, Bessie Stesler, and that you are carrying your joke rather far?"

The man, raising his brows, stared aggravatingly at Stesler; then, with a patronizing smile as he resumed his paper he said:

"Ah, William, you're the same mischievous rascal as always. But I'll not reprimand you, Molly," nodding toward his hostess; "my coffee and rolls as soon as possible, please."

He shifted his cigar from one side of his mouth to the other, read up and down the column, turned the page and continued his evident absorption. Mrs. Stesler silently adjourned to the kitchen, leaving her husband staring in dumb amazement.

"My dear sir, what may your name be, if I may ask?" Mr. Stesler questioned, after a few moments' silence.

"My name? my name? Ah, yes, yes—a very good joke. I've heard it before, though. William, tell Molly I want the coffee immediately, and plenty of cream. And, William, shove the table nearer my chair. I find this very comfortable; I believe I would rather not be disturbed. Thank you. Now the footstool, William. Yes, there—thank you. I'm quite comfortable."

Mr. Stesler, heartily ashamed of himself, nevertheless obeyed.

"Well, by Jove!" he mentally exclaimed as he slapped his thigh and gazed thoughtfully at his guest, "well, by Jove!"

"You want to swear, no doubt, William. I somehow feel that you want to swear. But defer it for the present. Just a few mild comments are all I permit. I'm very sorry, too, for something in your attitude tells me that you can scarcely control yourself. Oh, I nearly forgot. I want my shoes brushed. They're rather disreputable. Clean them, William."

Mr. Stesler betrayed his reluctance and disgust as the man held up a pair of mud-incrusted boots. He took them, however, and very delicately placed them just outside the door. The man resumed his paper, but soon added with some impatience:

"William, you are in my light. Move aside, please."

Some seconds of silence ensued before he broke out with a great guffaw.

"Well?" demanded Mr. Stesler.

"I was merely smiling over a patent medicine. They say here that it will cure rheumatism and consumption. I used it on a mule once. It cured him of balking, but he died within a few hours. I afterward used it to kill off all the rats on the premises. Oh, here you are, Molly, at last! The repast is, indeed, welcome. But more butter, please. I like lots of butter. Only three rolls? I eat six—always six, Molly. Always remember that in future. And white cups? I prefer blue, or, at any rate, some little decoration on my china. The coffee is very good, but I like it a little stronger and a little earlier, too. In fact, William, I shall expect you to bring it to my bedroom before I rise."

Man and wife exchanged worried looks and glances, and were immediately startled by another loud, vociferous roar.

"I'm always having the most delightful dreams. I dreamed last night that you wanted me to rob you. And I distinctly remember giving you a patent medicine. You liked the flavor, and I gave you more. And Molly took the rest. Oh, shall I ever forget what jolly, dancing corpses you made!" and he pushed back from the table a moment to give them the full benefit of his merriment.

Mr. Stesler was by this time really alarmed and unequal to the occasion. He motioned vainly for his wife to call the neighbors. But she was so confused that she failed to understand his frantic appeal.

After eating greedily, the visitor sat back and nonchalantly waved his hand.

"William, a shave, please. I'll remain here. You can manage, I think."

Mr. Stesler brought a shaving-mug and razor.

"Now, William, not too close, if you please. Put on plenty of lather. Molly, hold the mug, also the mirror in front of me, so I can see what William is doing. Ah, yes, that's comfortable. Continue, William."

With a shaking hand and pallid countenance, Mr. Stesler proceeded to shave his guest, possessing only enough presence of mind to hope the razor would slip and relieve the gentleman of his head. The impromptu barber had barely finished when the stranger nervously motioned away the mug, the mirror and Molly.

"William, the lawn is hopelessly disreputable. Indeed, I'm surprised at the evident carelessness about the place. Get out the lawn-mower, and I'll superintend. Great land o' Goshen! Don't stand there like that! Go to work, I say!"

Mrs. Stesler was somewhat amused at her husband's predicament. Her guest had no sooner caught sight of her surreptitious smile than he quickly added:

"My slipper dropped off. Molly, pick it up."

Both man and wife burst into a hearty laugh at their own chagrin. The guest glared very haughtily.

"No levity, please, no levity," said he, curtly.

He walked about the lawn a few moments studiously examining the shrubbery. "Now, William, the lawn-mower. And Molly, the garden-rake; and see that you gather the leaves and brambles into little piles."

He strutted about the yard, pointing sternly, frowning, ordering, loud in his imprecations as the work of cleaning up proceeded but slowly. In the midst of their despair the sound of wheels arrested Mr. Stesler's attention, and, pulling his wife frantically by the arm, he made an heroic dash toward a vehicle that just then tore into the yard. Two men hastily sprang down from the seat and rushed past with set, mysterious faces.

"Bess, is this a dream?" asked Mr. Stesler, anxiously.

"Why, no. This is a nightmare. Didn't you know?"

Their guest was growing still louder in his imprecations as the two men from the vehicle approached.

"I feel insulted, outraged! I told you, James, not to come for me so soon," he said with lordly dignity. He was backing away with a subtle, suspicious movement, when the two men hastily bound him with ropes and fastened handcuffs on his wrists.

"Has he harmed any one?" asked one of the captors, anxiously addressing Mr. Stesler.

Stesler stared vacantly and shook his head absently.

"He is one of our worst patients and killed his guard this morning."

"A lunatic?" exclaimed Stesler.

"Yes."

"Sir," said the lunatic, indignantly, "I am a gentleman of humor."

The guards bound him securely in the vehicle and drove away. Mr. Stesler was somewhat confused from the excitement. He finally found himself in his easy-chair, his slippers scattered about, his shaving-mug on the floor, his razor lying suggestively near, the tobacco jar turned over, his pipe lying broken on the threshold, the table all disordered.

"Well, dear, I'm sure you have had your little diversion, haven't you?" asked Mrs. Stesler in a quiet little manner all her own.

"Yes, strange to say, I have. And I didn't have to nip your ears or saw off the legs the table, either," and he lighted a cigar and began quietly to think it over.

FORCED TO RESIGN.

Lost a Good Position Through Bad Food.

"I felt immediately better after my first meal on Grape-Nuts, which I began to use after my health had broken down and I was a nervous wreck.

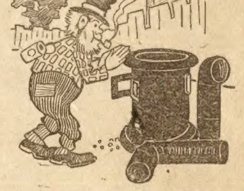
"My stomach was in such a condition that I could eat nothing and trying to eat was a burden to me.

"My pulse ran up to 115 and my weight fell 21 pounds. I got so I couldn't work and was forced to resign a good position. I took milk punches between meals and quit meat altogether but nothing improved my appetite and the condition of my stomach. I finally went on one meal a day and had to force myself to eat that and was rapidly starving until one day a friend suggested Grape-Nuts.

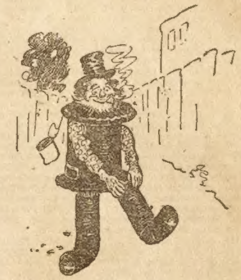
"Although my palate and stomach had rebelled against all other foods Grape-Nuts agreed immediately and I really relished this food while the changes in my condition have been wonderful. My weight increased from the start and I have now regained 12 pounds while my pulse is normal and I am a new person all over. Life seems worth living and I enjoy all my meals.

"To make sure that this change was due to Grape-Nuts I made the experiment of leaving off the food for five days but I began to go backwards so rapidly that I concluded I had satisfied my curiosity in this respect and I went back to Grape-Nuts again in a hurry and began to pick up again. Grape-Nuts certainly touched the spot and did the work." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

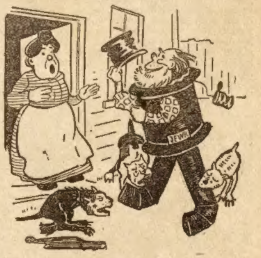
Look in each package for a copy of the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."



Pushing Pillsbury—I hear dey has bitin' dogs at de nex' farm.



"Well, what if dey has?



"Yes, mum; I takes bot' milk an' sugar in me coffee, t'anks."

Time to Run.

Sandy—Why are yer runnin' so fast, pard?

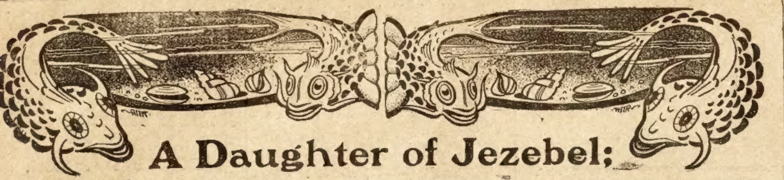
Cinders—Dere's a lynchin' mob behind me.

Sandy—Dey don't want to lynch yer, do dey?

Cinders—No; but dey want dis clothes-line I'm wearin' as suspenders fer de rope.

◆

Real estate dealers' lives should be filled with good deeds.



A Daughter of Jezebel;

Or, THE BLACKMAILERS OF GOTHAM. *By T. C. Harbaugh.*

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CHAPTER IX.

CHESTER BLAIR TAKES THE TRAIL.

In Hester France the nabob of Wall Street had encountered a woman of vast resources for evil. Cool and calculating, fair and captivating, she let nothing stand between her and the goal of her ambition. Unscrupulous, with a head for planning deep schemes, a wayward child, who early in life had broken from a mother's influences, she had thrown herself upon the world to make her way through it as suited her fancy.

She was the occupant of the house on Black street, that building in which Holton Clinch had encountered Luke Jarndyce, and, suspecting that the millionaire's mission there would give her an opportunity to carry out a diabolical plot, she had let nothing escape her that fateful night.

From the next room, through the medium of a crack in the partition, she had witnessed the entire scene between the two men and had heard every word. Quick to fasten upon the slightest thing that would give her power over Clinch, she had let nothing escape her. Not only this, but she had seen Holton Clinch and knew him for one of the money kings of the metropolis, hence her great joy when things turned out to her liking.

She felt that she had the man in her evil clutches. She knew that Stanley Gordon had long contemplated feathering his own nest by schemes as wicked as her own, and the twain concluded to work together, one for gold alone, the other for gold and a wife.

Lucille's happiness did not count with these two people. They did not stop to consider the young girl's happy life in the mansion on Murray Hill, but, pushing ahead in their plots, they intended to brush every obstacle aside and at last fill their purses at the sacrifice of honor and even life itself.

The balking of Hester's second attempt to blackmail Holton Clinch through Lucille's interference did not stop the daughter of Jezebel for a moment. To abandon the plot now meant utter defeat. She had already extorted five thousand dollars from the nabob and this was, in Hester's mind, a mere bagatelle.

The scene at the mansion only infuriated her against Lucille. It was Hester's work which had driven Mrs. Clinch from home, for she had sent her a letter in which she not only hinted of dark things, but cunningly made her believe that her first husband was alive and in the city. This was enough to bring about the disappearance, of which the reader already knows; it drove Ethel Clinch from home, sending her out into the world if not to the grave of a suicide. To fall from her high estate in society, to be pointed at as a woman who had two living husbands, was more than enough to unsettle the poor woman's mind and separate her from her child.

On the other hand, the care with which Holton Clinch guarded what he called his "financial honor" made a coward of him from the first. He was willing to sacrifice everything to keep "in the swim" on Wall Street. Had he defied the plotters from the first he would have broken their shafts and their schemes would have fallen harmless, but, coward-like, he trembled in the shadow of the exposure which he felt certain Hester and Stanley could bring about, and, hesitating too long, he lost his chances.

He even dared not accept Chester Blair's offer to become his champion. The young lover would have thrown himself into the battle and perhaps through him the blackmailers could be brought to the bar of justice; but that would necessitate the unraveling of his meeting with Luke Jarndyce, and bring about the very exposure which Hester and her co-plotter held over his head like an iron club.

But Chester Blair, when he quitted the millionaire's private office, had made up his mind.

Lucille had to be saved even at the expense of her foster father's honor, though he admitted to himself that he had some adroit schemers to deal with.

He would employ no detectives. Chester had but little faith in the average sleuth; already in his lifetime he had had some experience with such people, and many he had found unreliable.

He would take up the matter himself. If he failed he would have no one to blame but himself. And so he went to work at once.

He soon learned from Lucille's own lips the story of her last interview with the millionaire. Yes; she had offered to marry Stanley Gordon in order to save Holton Clinch's honor. But at the same time the fair girl hoped that something would turn up in time to prevent that sacrifice.

"Something shall turn up to save you!" cried Chester. "I am here and in the battle. You will trust me, dear?"

"In everything," was the reply. "And I will aid you in every way in my power; but those people are armed in some manner and are wholly unscrupulous."

"We will break their power. This woman whom you ejected from the house is a veritable fiend, fair though she be. But what is the hold they have on Mr. Clinch?"

"It must be something dreadful," said Lucille, with a perceptible shiver.

"Not so bad as he thinks, perhaps. He may have overestimated their power for evil. I will see this woman. I will drag from her her infamous secret, no matter what it is——"

"She will meet you with the courage of a tigress and the subtlety of the serpent."

"So much the better. That will give me a foe worthy of my steel. The harder she fights the more courage it will give me."

"But beware of the pair; they are desperate."

"Stanley Gordon comes for his answer tonight, I believe?"

"So father says."

"Will he come here?"

"That I do not know."

"When he comes he will receive an affirmative answer from Mr. Clinch?"

"Yes; unless something turns up."

An hour later Chester Blair might have been seen watching a woman who stood for a few moments on a street corner as if waiting for some one.

From the description of Hester France given by Lucille he believed he was watching that very person. When she started off she had him at her heels and he followed her to 39 Black street.

"So that is your nest, my fair bird," said the young man to himself. "I have tracked you down already. Well, tonight I will let Stanley Gordon play his card while you are likely to have a visitor."

It was not long till dusk. The shadows of night quickly followed the day and at six Chester Blair stood before the brick house on Black street ready for his interview with Hester.

He knew her name, for Lucille had told him, and when he rang he asked for her at the door.

"Second door to the left, third floor," was the reply he got, and a moment later he was mounting the stairs.

The house was still and apparently uninhabited. No one met him as he went up, and in a few moments he stood before the designated portal.

For a little while he listened; but not a sound came from the room beyond. Over the transom he saw a light which seemed to indicate that the chamber was tenanted.

At last he rapped lightly and stepped closer to the portal in order to be ready to throw himself into the room should the person who might open the door refuse him admittance.

A minute passed before the young man heard anything and then the door opened.

Instead of Hester France a man stood before him, a man whose face was pale and drawn, whose eyes almost lost themselves in their sockets and whose figure was gaunt and haggard-looking.

Chester did not ask for admittance, but threw himself across the threshold, and, turning, faced the man in the full light that prevailed.

The eyes in the deep sockets fairly flashed.

"Who are you?" demanded the occupant of the room. "What business have you in this house? I am Luke Jarndyce, and——"

Chester uttered a cry. Was this man Lucille's father?

CHAPTER X.

THE HAND OF A DEMON.

Chester Blair of course knew nothing of Holton Clinch's encounter with the man called Luke Jarndyce in that same house. He was totally ignorant of the hold Hester France and Stanley Gordon had on the millionaire; he did not know that Clinch had left this same man for dead on the floor, nor that Hester had told him that Jarndyce's body lay in the morgue.

Had he known these things he might have considered himself on the verge of a startling mystery and secret, if not in actual possession of the same.

He knew that Mrs. Clinch's former husband bore that name; but she had had tidings of his death in the South, hence her marriage to Holton Clinch.

But now he stood in the presence of a man who had announced that he was the living Luke Jarndyce. How could this be? The dead do not come back from the vast unknown. When the coffin lid closes down upon mortality that is the last of flesh.

No wonder Chester Blair stopped when the name was spoken and gazed at the speaker. There was a strange, insane look in the eyes before him, and Jarndyce, if the man was really that person, trembled with a spasm as he uttered the name.

Finally Blair recovered his self-possession.

"If you are Luke Jarndyce," said he, "you are the very man I want to see."

There was no answer, but a quick movement forward and before Chester Blair could escape a long arm shot out like an arrow and he felt a grip on his shoulder.

"You want to see me, eh?" laughed the other "You want to drag me into the courts again, do you?"

Before Chester could reply the door flew open and he turned to stand face to face with a woman whose face was white and in whose baleful eyes was the snap of a basilisk's.

Could this woman be the one he had followed to the house, the person whom he had intended to face and accuse her of blackmail if not other crimes? Surely, she must be Hester France.

In a second all doubts were dissipated, for the woman, striding forward, covered the lover with a quivering finger while words of momentous import leaped from her tongue:

"Fool! What brought you to this house? Can't you see that for you this is the house of death? I know you. You are Chester Blair, and your mission is not only the spy's, but the villain's as well. Think you that after what you have seen and heard, you will be permitted to walk away with the secret which is ours? You are from this moment dead to the world, dead to it forever!"

"And you——"

"I am executioner!"

Blair noted the growl that came from the man's throat. He saw Jarndyce edge around him until they stood face to face with but a step between. What would the man do? In Jarndyce's eyes there was now the unmistakable glare of the maniac. Was Jarndyce Hester's prisoner? Was this coolheaded woman holding him in thrall while she worked her diabolical spell on Holton Clinch?

Thoughts passed with lightning rapidity through Blair's brain.

Hester stood between him and the door, her superb figure a barricade which even with his strength he could hardly hope to break.

Was it strange that he heard the trip-like beating of his own heart—a frenzied woman between him and liberty and a maniac in his front?

"You have played the wrong card," went on Hester, speaking coolly now. "Fool! You have carried the game of the spy a little too far and not for all you've got would I open the door for you. It is the house of death to you, Chester Blair."

Suddenly, in responseto a motion by Hester, the gaunt man leaped forward and before Chester could throw up his hands was upon him like a wild beast.

Lucille's lover was borne backward against the wall and pinioned there by the long arms and ape-like hands.

He heard Hester France laugh.

"That is right," she said to Jarndyce; "this man has come to drag you into court, and you know what that means. Kill him! Kill the spy!"

In vain did Chester try to shake off that terrible wretch. He felt the fingers sink into his throat; he felt the fetid breath of the madman on his cheek and caught the white froth that dripped over the maniac's nether lip.

But he struggled with all his might.

"That's right," continued Hester, with the fury of a fiend. "If he lives you are gone. Pay off the old scores now and forever. He comes from Holton Clinch—the man who robbed you of your wife!"

What a woman she was. Blair could barely see the inflamed face and the magnetic eyes of Hester now, though the room was full of light. Everything was swimming before his disordered senses; his brain was filled with a rushing stream hot and lava-like; he was being choked to death and from the hands of Jarndyce there was no escape.

"Kill, kill, kill!" cried the daughter of Jezebel. "Dead men lie not, nor do they tell the truth. That's right. This man must die, for he is against you!"

These were the last words Blair heard. They seemed to reach his ears from far away like the shrieks of the damned, and suddenly everything, especially the lights, swam round and then the blackness of darkness swooped down upon him.

Could he have looked through that pall of insensibility and noted what happened next he would have seen the madman standing in the middle of the room working his fingers spasmodically and laughed as if inspired by the demons of tartarus.

Near by stood Hester France, the old mad light still uppermost in her dark orbs and her gaze riveted upon the figure lying on the carpet.

Jarndyce seemed ready to again launch himself upon their victim for he looked at Hester for permission, but the woman held up her hand in refusal.

"You've done your work well," said he. "You have prevented them from getting hold of you. That man was their spy. You are worth your weight in gold."

"Yes, yes; I am safe; ha, ha!" laughed the man demon, striking the table with his hands. "They will not get me now. They will not send me to the pesthouse where the dead are."

The mind of the poor mad wretch whom Hester France had made her tool had gone back to the yellow scourge of the South, to the days when the fever's victims were hauled out and thrown into nameless graves.

Hester laughed with him, but hers was a laugh of triumph and as it rang through the room Jarndyce joined in until the echoes were the height of malignity.

"Now, come with me," said the woman. "Pick him up. I'll show you where to put him."

The madman darted at Chester Blair and lifted him from the floor.

In another moment the room was quite deserted and the pair threaded the gloomy hall beyond the door.

A few minutes later they came back and Hester motioned the man to a chair.

But instead of taking it, he turned upon her and laughed with all the power of a fiend.

"Sit down! They will hear you!" cried the woman.

"I like to laugh. I heard them laugh down in the "beautiful place" where I lay in the South. Who are you? Why are you here? Have you come to take me away and throw me before the courts? I'll kill you like I killed him, and——"

No wonder Hester France's face lost every vestige of color.

The madman was now beyond control. He did not recognize her, but on the contrary regarded her as his enemy. He came forward with eyes aflame and hands clinched. Froth crept from his ashen lips and dripped over his chin. Hester, breathless, shrank to the wall and shivered.

It was her turn now to feel those terrible fingers and as Jarndyce advanced she felt her heart stand still.

CHAPTER XI.

LUCILLE SHOWS HER SPIRIT.

No man ever waited more eagerly for night than did Stanley Gordon who was to receive Holton Clinch's answer to his momentous question. That night he would know his fate and he did not doubt the result of the meeting with the millionaire. The man was in his power and Hester's. He dared not refuse to give him the beautiful Lucille; he was on the brink of social ruin and no one realized this more fully than the nabob himself.

The darkness came all too slowly for the plotter. He had not seen Hester for some time. That woman was amply able to take care of herself, but had he known what was passing in the house on Black street, if he could have seen Hester France face to face with a madman, he would perhaps have gone to her relief.

It was the selected hour when Gordon mounted the steps of the house on Murray Hill. He had nothing to fear. He knew that Holton Clinch had employed a detective to run them down, but he knew something that had not as yet reached the millionaire's knowledge; the sleuth had taken his money and played him false.

Thus the man of Wall Street was in the blackmailer's power. He was like one surrounded by a ring of fire from which, no matter which way he turned, there was no escape.

Stanley was ushered into the mansion by a servant and conducted to the library. Holton Clinch, a little paler than usual, but composed, greeted him from his chair. The clock on the stroke of ten soon afterward sent its musical chimes through the richly appointed room and Gordon listened. He was alone with his prey. Of course, he knew nothing of the interview which Chester Blair had had with Clinch in the latter's downtown office. Perhaps if he had known he might have abated a little of his confidence; but he was so sure of his game that he assumed a victorious look and waited for the nabob to open the conversation.

"You have considered?" said Gordon, as the other did not speak. "I was to call at this hour for my answer."

Holton Clinch shifted a little uneasily in his chair and looked stealthily across the room. Gordon became suspicious. Was the man ready to spring a trap on him? Had Holton Clinch at the last moment turned on his enemies?

"It is all right," said the millionaire, with an effort, as he pulled his nerves together. "I don't know just what the world will think of this alliance——"

"It always thinks what it pleases, anyhow," broke in Gordon. "I will risk the opinions of society and my wife and I——"

Clinch started at the word wife. He saw the enormity of giving Lucille to this man—this human leech; he foresaw the unhappiness of the fair girl and knew that he was consigning her to a life of bitterness and pain. But he must save himself. It would never do for him to lose his standing. No; he must still be one of the magnates of the Street without a smirch on his character. That was it. Better the wrecking of Lucille's life than the tainting of his own, the coward.

"Very well," he said, with a forced smile to Gordon, "if you will risk the whisperings of society, I will look out for the rest."

"You have seen her, then?"

"I have talked with Lucille and she consents."

Gordon could hardly keep back an ejaculation of triumph. The prize was won; the game had been played out, and he held the winning hand. Now, no one could rob him of the fruits of his victory. He had mastered every detail of the nefarious plot hatched up by him and Hester, and thenceforth he would appear as the scion of the house of Clinch.

"Did she raise much objection?" he ventured, after brief silence.

"Of course, you could not expect her to acquiesce at once," was the rejoinder. "You know these women. Now, sir, I want you to do one thing for me."

Holton Clinch leaned toward Gordon and for a moment seemed to hold his breath.

"I stand ready to return the favor," said Stanley. "Name your proposition."

"I want you to keep that infernal woman away," he heard Clinch say as his face lost color. "She was here last night with another demand for money. This thing must stop from this moment."

"It shall."

"That's good. Do you know what happened last night in this house?"

Gordon shook his head, but he knew what was coming.

Lucille threw her from the mansion. She was angry enough to have killed her and I am not so sure that I did not hope she would do so. You must keep this creature at bay——"

At this moment footsteps sounded in the hall and the door opened to reveal Lucille on the threshold fairer than ever in a handsome gown.

Stanley Gordon took in the beautiful vision, while his eyes lit up with lustful pleasure and when she came forward he rose and bowed politely.

"My daughter, Mr. Gordon," said the banker; "but I believe from what she has told me you have met before."

"But once, father," said Lucille, as she halted in front of the man who had bargained for her happiness. "We met in the park and—and it seems that you have carried out your threat."

She addressed the last words to Stanley and his face paled, for he noted the tone in which the words were spoken.

"I have played fairly," said he; "for months, Miss Lucille, I have been your secret admirer and with admiration came love——"

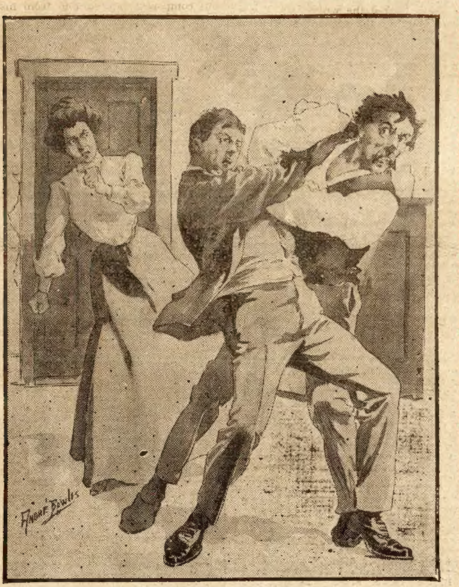
Lucille threw up her hand and abruptly broke the sentence.

"There is no love in this affair. It is simply business," she exclaimed. "There can be no love in an affair of this kind, and no person knows this better than yourself, Mr Gordon. I have given my promise to save him," and she threw a look at the old man in the chair. "I have consented to become your wife on conditions that you are to spare him his honor while you sacrifice mine on the altar of greed and lust and consign me to a life of bitterness. Hold! Let me finish. Don't interrupt me, please."

Gordon bit his lip almost through. He knew that he would hear a terrible denunciation from the whitened lips of the beauty of Murray Hill, but, prepared as he was, he was not ready for the words that next rang from Lucille's throat.

"You are not worthy the love of the most abject woman in this city. You are but a blackmailer. In league with a woman who long ago lost every vestige of goodness, you conspire against my happiness, force my poor shivering mother into exile and would now blight the life of yon old man whom you have rendered a coward moral and physical. I hate, despise, the ground you walk on! You, instead of being here, should tonight inhabit the cell of a felon in one of our prisons, and let me say that when I am your wife I will devote myself to sending you where you belong. Have you no mercy? I do not believe that your infamous scheme would bear the light. I mean by this that for one I believe that in reality your plot would fall to pieces if properly investigated. Wait! I am through in a moment. I have promised to become your wife; but that is all. The priest may unite us, but the moment after the ceremony we part forever, I to expose your villainy and deceit and to save yon old man; you to live hated, hunted, and at last to have all your plans dashed to earth. That is all. Good night!"

Lucille, with flashing eyes, turned from Gordon and in another moment had shut the door behind her.



"Kill him!—kill the spy!"

The noise of her footsteps died away on the ears of the two men left behind. They heard the last one on the marble stairs in the hall and at last Gordon turned to the millionaire.

"The girl—my future wife—showed her teeth, eh? But, wait. I'll tame her."

"Do you want her after all that?" asked Holton Clinch.

"Now more than ever!"

The millionaire shut his teeth hard, and sinking back in his chair let a groan slip from the depths of his soul.

CHAPTER XII.

GORDON AND THE TERROR.

The next day and the next Stanley Gordon did not go near the house in Black street.

Not that he wanted to avoid Hester, but he had certain matters of his own to look after. He wanted to discover what, if anything, Chester Blair was doing, for he knew that Lucille had given her heart to him and he doubted not that the girl had acquainted him with the deal he had made with the banker. It was more than likely that Chester would take up the gauntlet and make trouble for the schemers, therefore Gordon was anxious to meet the young man and nip any plans he might have formed in the bud.

In vain he searched for the young man. Chester had not been at his place of business for nearly two days, and his clerks announced that he was out of the city. That might mean little or much and Stanley interpreted it to suit himself.

At the close of the second day after his exciting interview with Lucille on Murray Hill he entered a little dark street not far from one of the more pretentious thoroughfares. He almost ran against a man, who at sight of him nearly fell against a dark wall, which he hugged in abject terror. Gordon caught the movement and at once regarded it as suspicious.

At first he thought he had been followed, but the next moment, as he got a better look at the man, he turned pale and started him.

Seeing that he was wanted by Gordon, the man broke into a run, letting slip a wild cry and in another minute had disappeared.

"Can it be possible?" cried Gordon, as he halted where he had lost the fellow. "Hester was to have guarded him as the apple of her eye, and if he is at large the devil may be to pay."

"What's that you're saying about the devil?"

At sound of the voice behind him Gordon turned and stood face to face with an old woman who leaned forward in her eagerness to look him fairly in the face. It was Hester's mother.

"What brought you hither?" demanded Stanley. "Seems to me you should be in your nest at this hour."

"You've called it by the right name," chuckled the old woman. "It is a nest and a broken one, too. Where's my girl?"

"Thunder take your girl! What have I to do with her?"

"You've bent her to your will," almost screeched the hag. "She has a temper, I know, but you have planned and she executes. You've made her bleed rich people, that's what you've done. She will land where she ought to land if you don't turn her back into the paths of goodness."

Stanley broke into a laugh of derision. The thought of turning Hester back to the paths of sinlessness was too much for his risibles. His laugh irritated the old woman and she suddenly came forward with her hands upraised.

"I'm going to block your little game," she said. "I'm not going to let that wild bird of mine soil the nest of another. I know more than you think I do of your schemes. You shan't marry the rich girl on Murray Hill, for I'll turn the crazy man loose——"

Gordon was where the woman stood in a moment, and his hands fell like trip-hammers upon her shoulders.

"You'll do what?" he cried. "What do you know about the crazy man?"

"A good deal, my vulture. I know all about him, for I've had a talk with him."

"When?"

"Tonight."

"Where?"

"Down yonder," and Mrs. France pointed down the almost lightless street. "He has his mind now and then, and when he has he can talk right. Say, do you remember the paper which my girl found in his pocket some nights ago when somebody left him for dead in the little room at Number 39?"

"What about it?"

"Ha, ha, what about it? That's what you would like to know, I reckon. You have your secrets and I have mine. You'll let old Helen France have her little secrets, won't you? Now, that's good. But probably she'd have them whether you consented or not."

"But what do you know about the paper you speak of?" demanded Stanley, and he threw a quick look up and down the street.

"Never mind. I'll tell what I want to and what I don't want to tell I won't, that's all," laughed the old creature. "You think you're playing a great game. Going to get a rich wife by it, I suppose? Well, I wish you joy, Stanley Gordon," and with this she laughed again and vanished.

Gordon heard her flying footsteps on the cobble stones and thought he caught a glimpse of her as she turned into the light of another street.

"What does she mean?" he asked himself. "Hester said she would take good care of that paper, and I let her have charge of it. How in the world did her old mother come to get wind of it? And where is Hester?"

He did not attempt to follow the old woman, but turned back and soon showed up in Black street.

He was almost sure that he knew the man who had vanished but a short time before his very eyes. There was something about him even in the semi-darkness that looked familiar, and the moment he appeared Stanley had asked himself a startling question.

Hester could set all his doubts to rest and for this purpose he directed his steps toward the house in Black street and without knocking opened the lower door and bounded up the stairs.

In a few seconds he was at the door of Hester's chamber and then inside.

There was no light in the room. A strange silence pervaded the place as Gordon shut the door behind him and for a minute he stood in the darkness wondering if the room had another tenant.

"Something's wrong," he said, half aloud. "Something's happened to Hester France since I saw her last. I——"

He heard footsteps outside the room in the hallway which he had lately traversed, and, drawing back, he drew a revolver, and holding ready, turned his face toward the door.

The shuffling steps came on and halted at the door.

Gordon held his breath. Never in his life had he been placed in just such a position. Surrounded by darkness in Hester's room with some one outside—some one evidently determined to invade the place—he seemed to have reached the end of his tether especially if the unknown in the corridor was his master in strength and fury.

Seconds went by on leaden wings to Gordon. He could have counted the pulsations of his heart as he waited with his hand on the trigger hoping that the unknown would strike a light the moment he entered the chamber.

At last the agony ended. The knob of the door turned. Gordon drew back so as to give full swing to his pistol arm and waited like a thug brought to bay.

"Why, it's all dark," said a voice that sounded like a trumpet call in that tense silence. "This certainly is the right room. Wait, I've got a match."

Gordon faced in the direction of the voice and waited with every nerve at tension. In another moment he would stand face to face with some one.

Suddenly he heard the scraping of a match on the wall. The first time was a failure, then the unseen one uttered an ejaculation of impatience and tried again. This time a little spark flashed out to grow into a bluish flame which in turn got yellow and then red like a match in full fire.

"I can see now," laughed the person with the match. "I will find her if she's here—"

Stanley Gordon waited to hear no more, but, one look being enough, he uttered a wild cry and springing past the speaker, darted into the corridor, and finding the stairs in the gloom, bounded down headlong, and, white-faced, landed in the street, out of breath and speechless.

The sight he had left behind he never forgot.

Further chapters of this extraordinary story will appear in the Ledger of next week. To every subscriber we are still sending our free cameras and free patterns as stated on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Jenkins on Combinations.

BY JOEL SLOPER.

Jenkins contemplates writing an article on what he knows about combination safe locks. His extensive informtion and scientific researches on this subject are the result of the following humorous incident:

Bradley has charge of the subscription books of a society newspaper published near Printing House Square. These books he places in a fine, large safe every night for safety against fire, and as there is no fear of burglars, he does not use the combination, but merely turns the bolts so that the door would not fly open if the safe should fall through a burning building into the cellar.

Now, it was supposed in this newspaper office that no man whose brains were in the usual place would go fooling around the combination; but Jenkins, the magnificent Jenkins, of the beautiful long hair and splendid mustache—Jenkins, who writes nice things about the ladies, the perfumed editor who gets up the fragrant editorials and those exquisite bits of gossip about fashionable society—the Apollo of the sanctum, was doomed to make a donkey of himself by his inquisitive meddling. Carelessly sauntering into the subscription department a few evenings past, he became interested in Bradley's duty of putting away the subscription books for the night, and asked a number of questions—why he put the books in the safe? Why he did not lock it? Would the books be saved if the building burned? Jenkins became so interested in the safety of the books that, under a strange, meddlesome impulse, he stepped up to the safe and turned the knob by which the combination was worked.

"Thunderation!" exclaimed Bradley, "now you have played smash!"

"Why, what's the matter, Bradley? What have I done?" inquired Jenkins, in an anxious tone.

"Done! Why, you have shut up shop and thrown the key away, that's what you have done. You have locked that safe and no one can open it."

"Oh, you can open it, can't you, Bradley? Here, I'll turn it back again like it was. I only gave it a little turn; I did not think it would lock."

"The deuce you didn't think it would lock!" exclaimed Bradley, in an angry tone. "Are you an idiot, Jenkins? Why, blast it all, a ten-year-old boy would have had better sense! Don't you know that safe locks by a combination which you can turn a thousand ways? Now you have locked it on some unknown combination, and you might work for a month on the lock without opening it."

"Oh, Bradley, my dear fellow, what is to be done about it?" exclaimed Jenkins, with a most lugubrious countenance.

"What's to be done about it? What can be done about it, Jenkins? Tomorrow morning a dozen clerks will be at their desks to write up the subscription books for this week's paper, and here you have shut up the publishing department by your foolish meddling, which will send the clerks off without work and delay the mailing of the paper; and now, with a vague idea that some fairy will spring up out of the floor and turn back the stubborn bolts, you ask, 'What's to be done about it?' I'll tell you what's to be done about it; tomorrow morning the safe company will send that splendid tandem team of theirs to the door and raise their derricks to take this large safe out through the window to their factory, where they will cut through the door to throw the bolts, and, then, after the books are gotten out and business starts up again, the safe will be sent back with a new door, and you will pay two hundred dollars as the price of your instruction in safe combinations."

"Great Jupiter, Bradley! I've got no two hundred dollars to pay for opening that safe. Oh, heavens, it will ruin me!" frantically exclaimed Jenkins, as he hopped around the room like a dancing Jack, and howled like a man at his third wife's funeral. "Don't you think, Bradley, that I might happen on the combination if I should work on it here all night?"

"You might try it; perhaps you could," replied Bradley. And so Jenkins sat down by the safe, with his supper and half a dozen cigars on a small table by him, and began his scientific investigations for the night.

The next morning Bradley went down early. There sat Jenkins, snoring in the easy chair, with his hand on the safe-knob, and the remains of his supper and stubs of cigars on the table. Poor, tired nature had succumbed to the exhaustive labors of the night, and the magnificent Jenkins, in a dilapidated condition, had hopelessly given up his efforts on the combination at the "wee sma'" hour of three a. m., and dropped into a troubled sleep, in which he dreamed that the safe, in being lowered from the upper window, had fallen on him and crushed him.

He opened his eyes and displayed a most woebegone countenance when Bradley entered, who said:

"Hello, Jenkins, you look sick!"

"Yes, Bradley, I feel miserable. I am going down to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge tower, and cap the climax of my folly with a splash."

"That's a capital idea, Jenkins, and I'll go down and see the water splash when you jump, if you'll only wait until I open the safe."

"But you can't open it," replied Jenkins, opening his eyes in a wondering manner.

"Can't I, though," said Bradley, in a provoking sort of way, as he sat down and threw back the bolt and opened the ponderous door after three minutes' work on the combination.

"How in the name of Heaven did you do it!" exclaimed the surprised and delighted Jenkins.

"Humph! just like I always open it," replied Bradley, in a careless tone. "The fact is, Jenkins, I could have opened it last night, but I wanted to teach you a lesson against meddling with business matters which you would never forget; and, now, hereafter, if you happen into a stone quarry, don't stave in the can of nitro-glycerin with a sledge-hammer, or stick your cigar in the keg of powder."

"I'm awful hungry, Bradley; let's go and have a good breakfast."

Not the Hose She Wanted.

"I wish to purchase some lawn hose," said the lady shopper.

"Yes'm," murmured the salesman, peering over the counter and gazing intently at her shoes.

"Rubber!" she exclaimed.

"Pardon me," stammered the clerk; "I was not rubbering. I merely wished to estimate what size you wore."

"Sir-r! I want rubber lawn hose."

Had it not been for the timely aid of the floor walker the salesman would have sent the lady to the department where they sold rubber stockings for huntsmen. For, as he afterward explained, he was new to the business and did not know but there was a new fad for rubber hose to protect the feet from the dews of evening.

PILES

"I have suffered with piles for thirty-six years. One year ago last April I began taking Cascarets for constipation. In the course of a week I noticed the piles began to disappear and at the end of six weeks they did not trouble me at all. Cascarets have done wonders for me. I am entirely cured and feel like a new man." George Kryder, Napoleon, O.

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Many a man's nose blushes for the acts of his elbow.

Bent pins and carpet tacks come under the head of felt goods.

The best possible throw of dice is to throw them into the sewer.

Of course Senator Quay is not dead and his enemies may as well act accordingly.

When some men get their freedom in this glorious land of the free they are in the ex-convict class.

Perhaps we may have to dig the canal first and ask permission of Colombia afterward.

We don't need an elastic currency as much as one with a little glue on each side of every dollar.

How would you like to own a few inches of that State street property which rents for $1,600 a foot?

At the exact moment the proposal is made a young man actually believes that he isn't worthy of the girl.

All the joys of Heaven and all the torments of the other place lie within the small circumference of a wedding ring.

Macedonia has discovered, after appealing pretty generally all around, that it can get freedom only by fighting for it.

King Edward's speech at the close of the British Parliament was one of the best ever written by his private secretary.

A company of Chicagoans is going to work the Brazilian diamond fields if the Glass Trust does not get out an injunction.

Live shells were fired at a French warship without any apparent effect upon it. However, Dewey's men were not behind the guns.

When Charlie Schwab gets his tailoring trust in operation he should make a specialty of boiler-plate vests for kings and emperors.

As society has demonstrated that it is not strong enough to suppress the toy pistol the only thing left to do was to discover a cure for lockjaw.

Some of Chicago's smoky atmosphere should be preserved in a glass case, for let us hope that it will be a great curiosity a hundred years from now.

LINKS OF LOVE AND GOLD;

Or, The Grey-Osmond Duel.

By Colonel Prentiss Ingraham.

(Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.)

Begun in No. 35, Aug. 29. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

From the day of his discovery that his confidential clerk was the husband of Maud Melville, Gerald Grey's nature seemed to change. He became more stern, more silent, and was wont to spend much time in meditation.

Towards Calvert Forrester and his beautiful bride he was ever most kind; dined with them every Sunday, and in many ways proved his regard for them.

Though often alone with Maud, he never referred to the confession of his love for her, and treated her now with an almost brotherly affection, while she became each day more attached to him.

There was one secret she had never told her husband—that Gerald Grey had ever confessed his love for her.

Not that she wished to hide it from any secret motive, only she thought it might cause a restraint between the two, and as it was, all seemed to go along pleasantly.

That Gerald Grey still loved her, she felt assured; she saw it in his eyes, in his every act; yet she was too wise to show that she knew it, but she pitied him from her inmost heart, and admired him the more for his brave manner of bearing his grief. If she was unloved by Calvert she felt she would wish to die, and she knew the strong nature of Gerald Grey was as capable of as deep a love as her own.

Thus matters went on for several months and then Calvert Forrester was appointed the manager of the firm, and his salary largely increased. He had rendered himself invaluable to his employers, and Langley & Co. blessed the day that he came to their establishment.

A few months after the marriage of Calvert Forrester and Maud, Gerald Grey sat alone in his bachelor quarters, a cigar between his lips, and his brow clouded in painful thought.

"There's a man to see you, sir," said his valet.

"Who is it, Payson?"

"Can't tell, sir. He says he's an old acquaintance, and wishes to see you on particular business."

"Show him up, Payson."

A moment after a stalwart form entered the room, and as the door closed behind him he bowed low to Gerald Grey.

At a glance he was recognized.

It was the man who had made the assault upon Gerald Grey, and who was sent to prison for one year.

"Well, sir, what do you want?" and perhaps it was caution, perhaps it was habit, but Gerald Grey put his hand in his vest.

"I'm to see you, sir, to bring you some news."

"I thought you were in jail."

"No, sir; I served my time out like a man, and now I'm an honest citizen again."

"Yes; you and honesty are likely to go hand in hand as long as you can get no chance to steal. I wish the judge had incarcerated you for life."

"Now, that's hard, for I didn't hurt you, an' I've been punished for what I did do; but I holds no grudge ag'in' you, no, sir, it ain't in me, and I'll prove it. I've come to do you a favor."

"You can do me no favor other than to clear out," said Gerald Grey, sternly.

"I'd not be so sure of that, Mr. Grey, for I can place your hands on the man who attempted your life; and it was not for gold he wanted to kill you."

"Ha! you say so? Put that man in my power and I will pay you liberally."

"I'll do it, sir, and I'll expect liberal pay, for I'm going to play traitor."

"You have become less nice on that point; at the trial you refused to tell what you knew of your comrade. Why do you wish to do so now?"

"Because he left me in jail one year and made no effort to get me out, and when I did get out, he would not lend me a helping hand. Revenge is sweet to a poor man, as well as to a gentleman like you, Mr. Grey."

"You speak the truth there, my man, as I have had cause to know. But now to the work before you. When will you place the rascally assassin in my hands?"

"Have you got pluck, Mr. Grey?"

"Try me," drily said Gerald Grey.

"It will try you, sir, for you've got to go alone—leastways with me—into a place where there is danger."

"Why all this mystery?" asked Gerald, with some suspicion.

"It can't be worked without mystery. Men as has their necks in the halter and is known to the perlice, must live in out-of-the-way places, and your man is keeping dark, owing to some little irregularities in his behavior of late."

"Where is he?"

"Say what night you will go, and I'll be ready to lead you to him."

"Tomorrow night—and I'll go well-armed against treachery."

"I advise you to. Pistols often save men's lives."

"Yes; and take life, too. Take a drink of brandy there on the sideboard, and come for me at eight tomorrow night."

The ex-prisoner poured out a liberal glass and then took his departure, leaving Gerald Grey in a more painful frame of mind than that in which he had found him, but with a nervous anxiety to face the man who had attempted to take his life from revenge. Who can he be, he wondered?

At the appointed hour, Big Angel, the ex-prisoner put in an appearance at the rooms of Gerald Grey, and found that worthy gentleman dressed in a free and easy suit, and with slouch hat and top boots, awaiting him.

"Well, my friend of the angelic name, I hope after tonight you'll prove the old adage true, 'Angel's visits few and far between,' for I don't like such cattle as you. But I am ready; take a drink and we'll start."

"I hope you has the amount to pay me, sir, when I've taken you to your man."

"Yes; I have it with me; but you seem very nervous about your money."

"You see, sir, I'll have to skip, after I've shown you my comrade; and I'll need money to get away with, for I'd be put out of the way mighty quick if I was caught betraying a pard. You see, sir, there's 'honor among thieves,' you know."

"So I've heard, but always doubted the truth of the assertion. Come, I am ready."

Seizing a stout cane and pulling the brim of his hat well over his eyes, Gerald Grey led the way down to the door, where a hack stood awaiting his coming.

"Get up with the driver, my man, and tell him where to drive," and Gerald Grey threw himself back upon the cushioned seat, and at a rapid pace the carriage rolled away.

A half hour's ride brought them to a few deserted-looking old houses, standing isolated near the bank of the Hudson River.

Near them the hack drew up and Gerald and his guide dismounted.

"Driver, await my coming in the shadow of yonder trees. If I do not return in two hours, go to the nearest police station, tell them where I went and say that I went on the track of a foe who attempted my life, I have reason to believe, on more than one occasion."

This was said in a low tone, but reached the ear of Big Angel, who was calmly surveying the horses.

"Now, lead on, and if you play me false, you will be the first to go. I'll send the devil a fallen angel," said Gerald, sternly.

"Mr. Grey, it ain't right to doubt a man who is betraying a friend to serve you," reproachfully said the man.

"You serve for gold and revenge, not for friendship; but do not stop to parley—I am impatient."

The man approached a low doorway and fitting a key into the lock, opened the door and stepped within into total darkness.

But Gerald Grey fearlessly followed him, and his guide said:

"Keep your hand on my shoulder, keep step with me and come on."

"Will the fellow be alone?"

"Yes; we will catch him asleep in his den. If we came after midnight there might be a score of wicked fellows in this house—just come in from a night's crime."

"You have brought me, then, into a den of thieves and cutthroats?"

"Yes; and they are pretty wicked fellows, Mr. Grey, I admit; but hold tight to my shoulder, for we haven't had any repairs done lately, and the floors and stairs are rickety."

"Yes; their creaking sounds like death-wails," answered Gerald Grey, as the two ascended the stairway—the guide, though in total darkness, leading the way without faltering.

With one hand upon his guide's shoulder, the other on his revolver, Gerald Grey followed up and down several stairs, through several hallways, until he was so confused he did not know whether he was above ground or below.

"You must be taking me to the devil's dominions, fellow," he said, at last.

"Well, I ain't taking you to the home of angels, that's a fact; but I'll soon have you there all right," and as he spoke he threw open the door of a dimly-lighted room.

By the oil lamp on the pine table, Gerald Grey took in the situation at a glance. A large room, with several doors and windows, a table, a chair, and a cot upon which lay a man, apparently sleeping.

A quick glance behind him showed several passageways running in as many different directions from the spot where he stood.

"There he is asleep, creep to him, and you've got him," said the guide, in a loud whisper.

Gerald Grey started lightly across the floor, but as he did so he cast a sweeping glance around him.

What he there saw proved to him that he had been led into a trap.

Suddenly in each doorway and window stood a man—a pistol in hand, and eyes turned on him, while the one who was on the cot half arose and cried:

"Gerald Grey, you are my prisoner."

Gerald Grey was a man of indomitable courage and possessed extroradinary courage and nerve, and did not lose his presence of mind, although he knew he had been brought there to be put to death.

On the contrary, he acted with lightning rapidity, and a shot from his pistol shivered the glass lamp into fragments, and left the room in total darkness.

Then, ere the jingle of falling glass had ceased, another shot was heard, followed by the hoarse tones of the treacherous guide, crying:

"Curse him! Kill him, boys! he's done for me!"

There was a heavy fall, a groan of agony, a rush of feet, and Gerald Grey was out of the room once more in the passageway.

He could not see, but he remembered one leading to the right, and with a noiseless step he fled along, leaving wild yells and curses behind him.

After running a dozen paces, he went cautiously along, his hands stretched out before him until he came to a door, for he felt the knob.

As his hand touched it, the door was thrown open and a dimly-lighted room was before him.

Stepping across the threshold he confronted a slender form—a young girl who seemed startled by his appearance.

"Fair girl, I was decoyed into a den of cutthroats. I have just escaped and thrown myself on your mercy to escape," he said, earnestly.

"Quick! Your pursuers are coming. I'll save you. Seek shelter in yonder closet!"

The girl spoke with rapidity and at the same time pointed to a door in the wall at the other side of the room.

In this Gerald Grey sought refuge, while the young girl turned to meet those who were coming towards the room

"What is it? Is any one killed?" he heard her shout in alarmed tones.

"Yes; the wrong man got his light put out—poor Big Angel—and the fellow as did it is gone. Did you see him, Bonny Bess?" cried a gruff voice.

"No; I came to see what the noise was. How did he get away, Uncle?"

"Slick as a whistle. He put out the light with one shot, killed Angel with another, and then skipped. Boys, we'll go back and nose him out of the other passage, for he's certainly not come this way, or my niece would have seen him."

"I'll lock the door, Uncle, and if he comes I'll ring the saloon bell. Oh, I'm so frightened," said the maiden, and, handing one of the men a lamp which he had asked for, the girl closed and bolted the door.

Then she found and lighted a candle and said, quietly:

"They have gone; now you can come out."

Gerald Grey stepped from the closet and stood before her, his face fearless, his lips determined—a splendid specimen of manhood.

The young girl gazed upon him with unconcealed admiration, and said, in a low tone:

"You do not look wicked, like the rest of the men I have known."

"Nor am I, fair girl," said Gerald Grey, and he gazed in unfeigned admiration on the maiden who stood before him—a well-dressed, beautiful creature of scarcely more than seventeen, and upon whose face evil association had left no guilty trace.

CHAPTER XV.

"Why did you come here if you are not wicked?" asked Bonnie Bess, looking straight into the man's face.

"I will tell you in a word. A year or more ago, I was attacked in the street by two men, one of whom attempted to kill me. One of them escaped; the other—the gang called him Big Angel—was captured by the aid of a gentleman who came to my aid, and he was sent to prison for one year. Serving his time out, he sought me, promised to betray the man who more than once had attempted my life, and he led me into a trap here, from which I can only escape by your goodness of heart."

"Who was this man who wished to kill you?"

"That I do not know."

"Can you think of any one who has a life grudge against you?"

"Yes; of several."

"Why should they? You do not look like a man who would wrong another intentionally."

Gerald Grey's face flushed, and he seemed for an instant nonplussed by the innocent compliment. Then he said, quietly:

"I told you before that I was not wicked, but I have been a soldier and a great traveler, and, of course, have hurt some men in my time."

"And women, too?"

Again the rich blood filled the man's face, to remain but an instant, and to leave it deadly pale—a paleness that his imminent danger a few minutes since had not called there.

To turn the tide of conversation, he said, quickly:

"I love them too dearly, respect them too highly, to injure them; but allow me to become a questioner in my turn. Why do I find you here, an angel in a devil's den?"

"That is a long story," said the maiden, sadly.

"Yet, one to which I will gladly listen. You are above this life, are refined in manner, educated, and——"

"And what?" she said, as Gerald Grey paused.

"And beautiful—far more beautiful than many New York belles of today."

"I know it, but"—and the young girl spoke bitterly—"I am the daughter of one who died on the gallows for murder; I am the niece of the leader of a band of robbers; aye, of murderers, as you have occasion to know."

"If you know so well what your associates are, why do you remain with them?"

"Because I have nowhere else to go. My mother left me, when she died, to the care of her only brother, not knowing the evil life that brother led. He sent me away to school, and six months ago I came to keep house for him—came from the outside world of life and joy, to this dingy old rookery, the abode of thieves. Now you know the history of Bessie Bernard, familiary called Bonnie Bess."

The maiden ceased speaking, and her red lips wore a sneer, her large, dark, passionate eyes flashed with a fire that threatened to burst out in fury.

"Have you any faith in man's promises?" asked Gerald, quietly.

"I have never had cause to know whether men were true or not," innocently replied Bonnie Bess.

"Then, let me prove to you that some men are true in this world. Leave this house, these evil associations, and come with me; you shall have a home where your uncle cannot find you, and you shall have all that will make you happy. Believe me, it is no idle offer I make you; nor is it a fancy on my part for your beautiful face. I am deeply interested in you, and you have saved my life, and life is dear to me, for there is much I wish to carry out ere death puts his icy touch upon me. Besides, I believe you wholly innocent of wrong-doing, notwithstanding your evil associations."

"I thank you. I am true to myself and I will leave this devil's den——"

"Though also the abode of an angel."

"Do not compliment me; I do not like it."

"I will not offend again. Will you come now?"

"Yes; I will accompany you; I will make a home for myself away from here, and trust you to aid me. If you fail me, I will wish to die."

"Come, I will not deceive you."

The maiden moved quickly about the room, making a few hasty preparations, and then throwing open a door, concealed by a curtain, stepped out into a dark passage.

Without a word Gerald Grey followed her.

"Give me your hand; it is dark as night; but I know the way well," said Bonnie Bessie, and the man clasped her soft hand within his own.

A walk of a few steps brought them to a stairway, which descended still in utter darkness, and at the foot they found a door heavily barred.

The bars were readily removed by Gerald Grey, and the two stood in the outer air, where the stars shone quietly down upon them.

Before them lay a small garden plot of flowers, which seemed to have been well cared for; behind them towered the mass of old houses. Here the maiden paused and said, firmly:

"You must make me a promise before I leave this spot."

"I will do so; name your wish."

"That you will not bring the police upon this spot, or in any way let it be known that a band of ruffians have their den here."

"That is a hard request to make, I think."

"Perhaps, for the good of the community, it is; but I love my uncle, bad as he is, for he has been ever good to me——"

"Good to you in bringing you to a den of infamy?"

"He knew not where else to have me go; you are free; you can go; but I will not leave with you, as you desire to bring the only one I have to love to the gallows. Did I not tell you that my father was hung like a dog, strangled to death by the law?"

"I fear you wrong me; I will make the promise."

"Thank you! ha! who are those? Come, we must reenter the house."

As the maiden spoke, several men came suddenly into the garden from an adjoining garden, divided by a large hedge.

As the young girl turned to retrace her way to the open doorway, followed by Gerald Grey, they were discovered, and the strangers rushed forward, one of them crying:

"There is the fellow now! Shoot him down if he runs!"

Instantly several pistol shots were fired, and with a cry of pain, Bonnie Bessie staggered and would have fallen had not Gerald Grey caught her on his left arm, while his right hand quickly drew his revolver.

One tall fellow was in front—the same who had come to the maiden's room and asked her about the fugitive.

Instantly Gerald Grey fired and without a moan the man fell dead.

"Great heavens! you have killed my uncle!" groaned Bonnie Bessie, and she tried to release herself from Gerald Grey's arm.

But the effort was too much for her; she was already suffering from a bullet wound in the shoulder, and she fainted away.

Grasping her more firmly, Gerald Grey fired rapidly upon the others of the party, and dashed away at full speed.

Leaping an old fence, he found himself in an old field. One glance about him, and he recognized the clump of trees where he had left his carriage.

It was only a hundred yards away, and he started at full speed, clinging closely to his unconscious burden.

As he ran there was the sound of alarm behind him, and he felt that a close pursuit would follow.

But strong of limb and swift of foot, he knew that he could reach the timber before his pursuers, and if the carriage was still there, easily get away. If the vehicle was gone, why, then, he must stand at bay and depend on his own courage, cool nerve, and deadly aim to keep back his enemies.

At last he reached the woods, and just in time, as quite a number of men were coming from the garden in full chase. The carriage was there; the coachman asleep on the box. But it did not take an instant to rouse him, place Bonnie Bessie inside, and spring in himself.

"Drive for your life, coachman; yonder hellhounds will make short work of us if they catch us," cried Gerald Grey, and the whip descended heavily upon the horses, who bounded away at a full run from the scene of danger.

* * * * * * *

For reasons best known to himself, Gerald Grey did not tell his confidential clerk and manager of his adventure in the thieves' den, nor of the visitor who had betrayed him into the trap.

And what seemed very strange to Calvert, who knew his employer's love of city life, Gerald Grey suddenly moved from town to the country, renting, he said, a little box of a cottage out in Jersey somewhere, so that he could get a chance to have some shooting.

As it was not the game season, it seemed strange for him to become a hunter; but Calvert Forrester did not question him; he knew that his employer took many strange notions, and believed a week would tire him of country life.

Yet a week, a month, and longer passed away, and not only did Gerald Grey seem not to tire of his country home, but he only came to town once in several days, so much did he seem to like his cottage in Jersey.

When keeping bachelor's hall in the city, Gerald Grey was wont to continually invite Calvert Forrester to his rooms, and scarcely a day passed that the manager did not drop in, and over a friendly glass of wine and fragrant cigar, enjoy a chat with his employer.

But to the "Ranche," as Gerald Grey called his fancy cottage, Calvert Forrester, strange to say, had never been invited.

"It would be so pleasant to run out and spend Sunday with Mr. Grey," said Maud, who felt a curiosity natural in a woman to see the spot in which this proud, stern, mysterious man had hidden himself.

To gratify his wife, Calvert several times hinted that Mrs. Forrester would like a day in the country; but Gerald Grey did not respond with a prompt invitation to the cottage, and the confidential clerk felt that the merchant cared not to be intruded upon by him, and he was the more convinced in his opinion, when Gerald, when dining with him and his wife, which he did once a week, would seem to avoid speaking of himself and his modus operandi of whiling away the time when in Jersey.

About the time that Maud's curiosity had risen to fever heat, a circumstance occurred that at once turned the thoughts of all in another direction.

That circumstance was the sudden death of the senior member of the firm of Langley & Co.

He had been a good liver, a fair drinker, and, had died at his favorite employment—eating an epicurean dinner—died with a glass of rare old Burgundy in his hand, while his lips were praising its deliciousness.

He was a bachelor, with a wild nephew as his only heir, and as he fell from his chair, a smile of conscious pride, of sudden wealth, and regret at the death of a generous relative, crossed the nephew's face.

The boon companions of the dead merchant, and like him, high livers, turned pale—they stood at the threshold of death, across which they might step at any moment, and they at once, mentally, made resolves to cut down their supply of liquor, eat less of rich food, go to church next Sunday, pay up their pew rent, and live virtuous lives—at least until the funeral was over.

The heir and nephew did his duty nobly to his uncle—had the finest hearse in the city, paid extra for heavy black plumes for the four black horses, hired carriages enough to carry a brigade of mourners, and ordered a fine marble tomb.

Then, when all was over, and when he was alone in his mansion, he went down to the place of business and expressed a desire to withdraw from the firm; he desired a settlement as soon as possible, and would invest his money in Europe, where he expected to live the remainder of his days, for though he never expected to have a wife, he intended to have a mistress, and Paris was the only place where he could allow himself that feminine luxury and not create a terrible scandal.

"It will necessitate our sending a competent man to San Francisco, China and Australia, but it shall be done, and the settlement made with you within six months," said Gerald Grey, quietly, and with inward exultation, for he was not sorry at losing the nephew from the firm; the profits were large, and the income would divide more generously between two.

Having settled this with the idle and dissolute heir, Gerald Grey sought the home of Calvert Forrester, who had left business at an early hour that day.

When the dinner was removed, and cigars lighted, Gerald Grey said, with some degree of annoyance:

"Forrester, I am goingto make a proposal to you, that I fear neither yourself nor your wife will like; but it is for the good of the firm that I do so."

"In any way that I can serve you, Mr. Grey, do not hesitate to command me," said Calvert, earnestly.

"Thank you; well, to dive at once into the matter, that scapegrace nephew of my late partner wishes to withdraw from the firm. This will necessitate some one going to California, China and Australia, to square up accounts with the branch houses there, and I have chosen you for that important mission."

"I will be ready, sir, just as soon as I can take my wife to her parents and return," promptly answered Calvert Forrester.

But Maud turned pale. Australia! China! California even, were so far away—must miles of sea and land divide her from her husband?

And for six months, too! Oh! what an age of time for one to be separated from one most fondly loved!

It was no wonder the tears came into the beautiful eyes of Maud Forrester and that she faltered out the words:

"Oh, Calvert, must you really go?"

"Not if you wish him to remain," said Gerald Grey, pleasantly; but again that strange light came into his eyes.

"Maud, my darling, you must not be unreasonable. Mr. Grey has honored me with his confidence, and has certainly done as much for me, for us, as a father or brother could have done; nay, more, those of one's kin, nowadays are less willing to stretch forth a helping hand. No; I must go and you will have a pleasant visit to Riverside Cottage, and when I come back it will seem like our old love-making days over again."

The kind, quiet tones of her husband reconciled the loving wife, and she at once threw aside her objections, and entered with spirit into the plan.

Two days after, Calvert Forrester and his lovely wife left for Riverside Cottage, and ten days later the confidential clerk of Langley & Co. sailed for San Francisco.

Gerald Grey bade him farewell at the steamer, and watched the vessel far down the harbor.

Then he turned away with a strange look upon his face, his eyes brightly gleaming, his lips firm and cold.

CHAPTER XVI.

In a pleasant valley of New Jersey, an hour's ride by sail, and a half hour's drive by vehicle, was a lovely little country home.

A few acres of woodland, field and pasture, a generous vegetable garden and an equally generous flower plot, filled with choice exotics, surrounded the house—a gothic building, small, pretty, cosy, the very dove-cote for young lovers.

A substantial barn, cows, sheep, and fowls in abundance, with a stream wandering near by, the Rawabo Mountains in the distance, and a fine view up and down the valley, here and there dotted with other homes, made up the pretty picture.

No; not quite, for in the front room in an easy rocker, sat a fair young form.

The eyes were downcast, for the hands were busy upon a slipper pattern; but often they were raised to glance up the road, which was within a few rods of the door, and then the beauty of those eyes was visible, and ah! how beautiful they were—deep wells of passion that seemed to burn those upon whom they turned.

The face was dark—a brunette of the Spanish type, and the features mobile, faultless and full of expression.

On the balcony rail sat a parrot, a knowing bird, that chattered incessantly, and in the cages near by were canaries and a mocking bird, while a huge French cat and tiny black-and-tan terrier was asleep on the grass.

Presently the parrot called out:

"Man coming!"

The terrier understood the bird—the two were good friends—and sprang up with a vicious bark, while the eyes of his mistress were raised and turned towards the gate.

The parrot was right, a man was entering the yard, his step slow and hesitating.

He was a thick-set man, heavily bearded, and well-dressed, as far as the clothes went, but not after a fashionable style.

"This is Mrs. Grey, I believe?" he said, politely removing his hat.

"Yes; what do you wish?" quietly replied the one addressed.

"Is Mr. Grey at home?"

"No; he is in the city, and will not return until evening."

"I am glad to hear it; I came to see you," and the man gave a savage kick at the terrier, who was growling about his heels.

"Be still, Pet; why would you see me, sir? If you have business, explain, please, for I dislike visitors in the absence of my husband," and the tones and manner were haughty in the extreme.

"Your husband! Pardon me, but isn't that a good joke?" and the man laughed a hoarse, disagreeable laugh that grated rudely on the delicate ears of the woman.

"Leave this place at once, sir!" she said, with firmness, her face very pale, her lips white.

"Now, look here, my fair lady, you must not answer in such a haughty tone. I come here to have a talk with you on a subject that deeply interests me and you."

"What have you to say to me?"

"I will talk quick, but as I've had no liquor for several hours, my tongue must necessarily lag. You don't know me, madame, but yet I lived in the same house with you for several years, and have seen you often; besides, it was me that closed the eyes of your uncle, and if he'd been able to speak he'd have told me to look after Bonnie Bess; but you seem to have looked after yourself pretty well."

"Who are you?" asked Bessie, looking straight in the man's face, and holding on to the back of her chair by which she stood, as if for support.

"I'm the innocent cause of the row at the den that night, Miss. You see, I'm the man whom your so-called husband wished to kill; it was me who has made three attempts to take his life, and missed it every time."

"Why do you wish to kill Gerald Grey?"

"That is a long story, girl, and one not for your ears; but it is revenge that drives me on."

"And you have come here to meet him?" faltered Bonnie Bessie.

"I'm no fool. Gerald Grey is not a man to meet in an open fight. If I shoot him down one of these days, it will be from behind a fence, or a thicket; he's too nearly allied to the devil to meet in fair combat."

"Grand rascal! grand rascal!" shrieked the parrot.

"That bird's got sense, he has," said the man, admiringly; "he knows his master well. But now to business; are you married to Gerald Grey?"

"You are impertinent, sir; but what matters it to you?"

"I'll tell you; if you are married, then you don't need aid; if not, there may come a day when you need money, and your uncle left a few thousands in gold that I found in his rooms, and I concluded to come and tell you that you was his heiress; for you see there's honor among our class, hard as it is, and though I confess to having taken a fee for my services, yet I would not take all, and hence I looked you up, and will put the money in bank for you."

"You are very kind; but I do not care for the money. It is blood money, and if not taken at the point of the knife was stolen in the night from those who earned it honestly. Keep it, for as the heiress to the vile horde, I give it to you," and Bonnie Bessie spoke with proud disdain.

"Thank you, Miss; it is very kind of you to make me your heir; it will aid me in running your husband to the grave."

"What! Are you so vile as that?"

"Compare us, Miss; you claim to be the wife of one who killed your own kin—the man who had been a father to you."

Bonnie Bessie flinched, the shot went home; but she said, quickly and earnestly:

"Accident made me what I was—the daughter of a man who died on the gallows, the niece of the murderer and thief. Yes, my uncle was kind to me; that is, he gave me all I wanted, and treated me well; but, alas! he reared me to know how vile my life was under his care. He let me see an honest world and then took me back to live amid scenes of infamy. Was that kind?"

"And for it you kill him."

"I did not kill him——"

"Yet you married the man who did."

"I met that man in deadly danger, and I saved him. In escaping, we were discovered

(Continued on page ten.)

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The nervous housewife busy with a hundred duties and harassed by children; the business man, worried with the press of daily affairs, debts, etc., cannot enjoy the peace and restful repose and healthful nervous balance unless they know how.

There is a way. First and foremost the stomach must be consulted. That means leaving off coffee absolutely, for the temporary stimulant and the resulting depression is a sure ruin to the nervous system, and the whole condition of health and happiness rests upon stomach, nerves and mind.

Start with the stomach, that is the keystone to the whole arch. Stop using things that break down its power, upset its nervous energy and prevent the proper digestion of the food and the consequent manufacture of healthful blood and nerves, brain and tissues.

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These are solid substantial facts and can be proven clearly to the satisfaction of any one, by personal experience. Try the change yourself and note how the old condition of shattered nerves and worried mind changes to that feeling of restful poise of a well balanced nervous system.

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An Up-to-Date Fable.

Once upon a Time an Old Gentleman observed a small Boy hacking one of his beloved Fruit Trees with a Hatchet. Now the Old Chap was aware that he was carrying Weight for his Age, which put him Wise to the Folly of chasing the Youngster, so he thought it was Him to work a Molasses Fly-Catching trick. "Come here, my good Boy," he called in a tone of Voice that was Smeared all over with Friendliness. "G'wan, what's Gnawin' you?" asked the Urchin, as he began to Side-Step. "I have something Important to tell you," answered the Foxy Old Hypocrite. "Well, go put it on Ice," rejoined the wily Hatchet Manipulator as he started in the opposite Direction. "Little Boys like Me don't need to know Everything."

Moral—Where Ignorance is Bliss it is Folly to acquire Blistering Wisdom.

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He Was a Rude Man.

"John," said the young wife who prides herself on being sensible right up to the limit, "just notice how easy-fitting my new shoes are."

"Yes, I see," answered John.

"And, John," she continued, "do you know why I always get my shoes so large?"

"Oh," replied the ungallant other half of the sketch, "I suppose it's because you have such big feet."

A Fine Kidney Remedy.

Mr. A. S. Hitchcock, East Hampton, Conn. (The Clothier), says if any sufferer from Kidney and Bladder Disease will write him he will direct them to the perfect home cure he used. He makes no charge whatever for the favor.

Similar but Different.

"Hello, there, cully!" exclaimed the bank burglar as he encountered an acquaintance. "Are you still picking pockets?"

"Sure," answered the light-fingered gent; "but I've got a new scheme for doing it that sidetracks the police."

"Put me wise," said the b. b.

"All right, but keep it mum," answered the other. "I'm running a railway lunch counter. See?"

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25 cents a bottle.

A Woman Well Informed.

Mrs. Kicker—Is Mrs. Jones a well-informed woman?

Mrs. Bocker—Yes, indeed; her cook has lived with all the other families in the neighborhood.

Hadley Revised.

Son (just from Yale)—President Hadley says money should not be life's aim.

Father—Exactly! You should not aim at it; you should get it.

Appalled Him.

City Nephew—Yes; the dinner our club gave cost $10 per plate.

Uncle Hi—Great horsefat! An' what did the saucers an' other stuff cost?

Dangerous Place.

Ernie—Are tunnels really dangerous?

The Bachelor—Should say so. I knew a man who kissed a girl in a tunnel one time and he had to marry her.

Knew the Pattern.

Landlady—I'll have to request you to pay in advance, Mr. Shortleigh.

Shortleigh—Why, ain't my trunk good for a week's board?

Landlady—No; it looks like one of those emotional trunks.

Shortleigh—Emotional?

Landlady—Yes; one that is easily moved.

In the Right Place.

Askitt—By the way, what became of young Chillington who graduated with our class in '98? Cold, calculating sort of fellow, you remember?

Knowitt—Yes; I remember; and he's the same cold, calculating chap now that he was then. He's got a job as bill clerk with an ice company.

Uninterrupted Chicago Bliss.

"What of my future?" asked the fair maid.

"You will never know what grief or sorrow is," answered the fortune-teller.

"And—will I marry?" queried the fair one, anxiously.

"Sure," replied the visionary prophetess. "Four times."

Out at First.

"Sir," began the young man, "I came to ask your daughter's hand in marriage. I feel that I am not worthy of her, but——"

"Young man," interrupted the stern parent, "I fully agree with you on that point and there is nothing further to be said on the subject. Good evening, sir."

"A Good Thing."

Myer—I understand Scribbleton's new play is a failure. Have you seen it?

Gyer—Yes; there is one good thing in connection with it, however.

Myer—What is that?

Gyer—The "angel" who is putting up for its production.

Hopeless Case.

Tomdix—Have you learned to make the repairs on your automobile?

Bojax—No; and I'm afraid I never shall.

Tomdix—Why not?

Bojax—I haven't a bit of mechanical genius. Honestly, I don't believe I could invent a washing machine.

They Surely Will.

Young Microbe—And so we are parasites, and are killing the man we are in?

Old Microbe—That's the case, exactly.

"And you say he has summoned the doctors?"

"Yes."

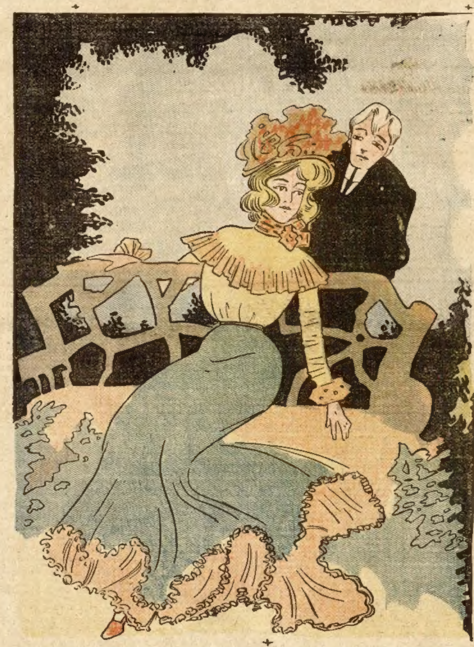
"What will the doctors do?"

"Can't tell yet, but I am sure of one thing; they will call us hard names."

Conclusive.

"Has anything definite been heard about Midgwell, who went out West some time ago and disappeared?"

"Only a four-word telegram that came to his friends the other day. It said: 'They were not mushrooms.'"



Willie Winterman—And so you won't marry me?

Mamie Montana—Why, how perfectly ridiculous you are, Willie. Why, you're nothing but an American!

Quite Another Matter.

"Before I give you my answer," said the fluffy-haired summer girl, "I would like to know if you are in a position to keep me in the style to which I have always been accustomed?"

"If the styles don't change too often I am," replied the wise youth. "Otherwise the odds are in favor of my going broke."

Contributing Causes.

Miss Ascum—Did you really attend her wedding?

Miss Wryvell—Oh, yes, indeed! And I enjoyed myself immensely.

Miss Ascum—Did you, really?

Miss Wryvell—Her gown didn't fit her at all, and I heard several people say she looked a perfect fright.

Her Only Comment.

"Nevertheless, my dear," said the masculine portion of the combine, "there are a number of men in the world who are my mental inferiors."

"John," rejoined the wife of his bosom as she looked him square in the eye, "you were always a confirmed cynic."

Sure to Pop.

"Where you going, Jason?" queried the citizen of Kentucky.

"Goin' down to Matilda Lee's to pop the question," replied the lank youth.

"But you have your gun."

"Yes; if I find Brace Bradley's ahead of me I'll pop him."

Pa's Wisdom.

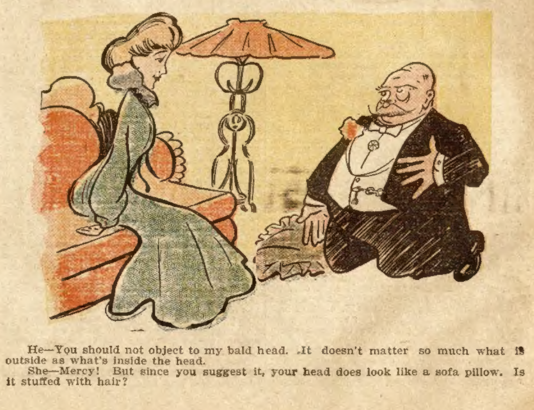
Little Willie—What are dividends, pa?

Pa—Dividends, my son, are what the stockholders get after the directors appropriate their share.

Very Thing.

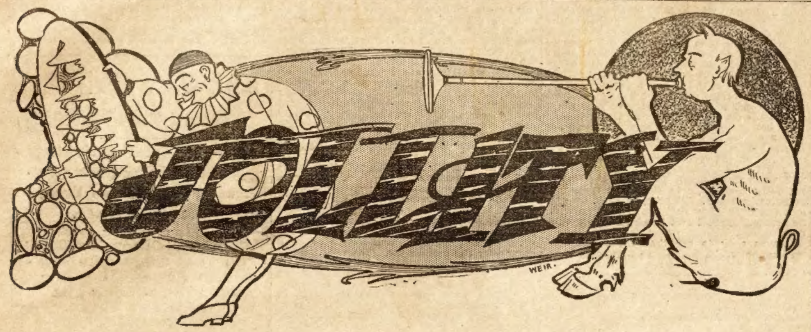
"What kind of lead pencil is best for writing a love letter?" asked the blushing maiden.

"Soft," replied the practical man, with a laugh.



He—You should not object to my bald head. It doesn't matter so much what is outside as what's inside the head.

She—Mercy! But since you suggest it, your head does look like a sofa pillow. Is it stuffed with hair?



Somewhat Sarcastic.

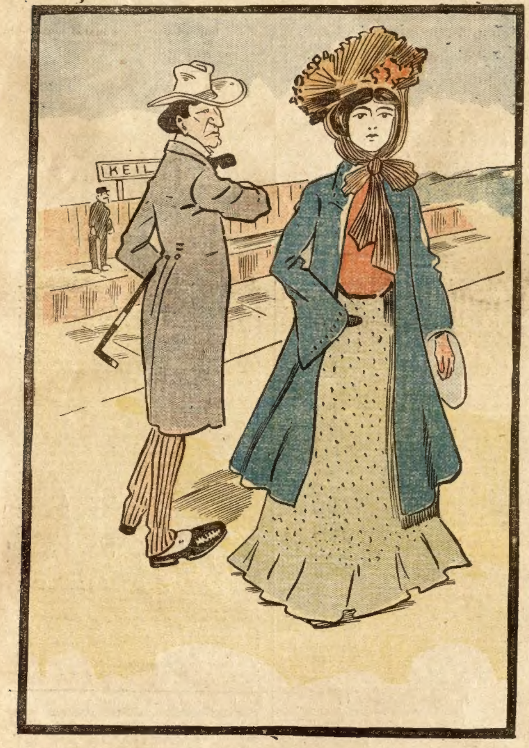
"I have always had a horror of premature interment, don't you know," remarked De Borem, "or, in other words of being buried alive."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Miss Cutting, "you are foolish to worry about the impossible."

He Recognized Them.

"Our minister gave voice to some great thoughts in his talk this morning," said the good deacon.

"Yes," replied the village librarian, "thoughts, in fact, that have been thought by some of our greatest thinkers."



Hamlet Brutus—But, madam, you are not heavy enough to play the part of Ophelia.

Miss Frizzle—But my father has plenty of money and he would pay you a hundred dollars to put me on the stage in that part.

Hamlet Brutus—Have you the hundred dollars with you?

Miss Frizzle—I have.

Hamlet Brutus—That makes you heavy enough.

A Marine Secret.

Young Lady (out sailing)—What makes the mast shine so?

Catboat Captain—Grease.

"What good does the grease do?"

"Saves lives."

"Whose?"

"The lives of young ladies who would otherwise want to stand on the bow."

Not a Success.

Lowe Comedy—Hamm made his debut in vaudeville last night.

Hi Tragedy—Yes; it was a monologue, wasn't it?

Lowe Comedy—Not exactly. Hamm intended it to be, but the audience chimed in with a few choice remarks before he got fairly started.

Between Friends.

Ernie—Yes, Jack proposed by telephone today. I almost accepted him.

Ethel—Then it was a close call?

Ernie—Oh, no, a far call. He used the long-distance telephone.

A Restful Life.

Young Lady—I hate railway traveling, as a rule, but when we were South I found a perfectly lovely little railroad. It was just too sweet.

Caller—In what way?

Young Lady—It was so quiet and restful, and they never had any time-tables to bother with.

An Occasional Change.

Leavitt—How are things at the old boarding house, anyway? Get bacon and eggs every morning, as usual?

Stayer—Oh, no; we get an occasional change now.

Leavitt—You don' say so?

Stayer—Yes; some mornings we only get bacon.

Disgusting Ignorance.

Cholly—Why did you discharge your man?

Algy—He was too ignowant. Whenevah I was writing a lettah and wanted to know how to spell a word, he had to look in the dictionawy.

A Friend of Humanity.

Friend—What are you at now?

Inventor—Greatest thing of the age. Millions in it! I am making a steam man—regular man, all iron and steel, with steam as the motive power.

"Can he draw a wagon?"

"N—o; I'm afraid not."

"Carry burdens, perhaps?"

"N—o; he'd upset."

"Might row a boat, maybe?"

"Too heavy."

"Might fix him so he could tend the furnace?"

"Couldn't possibly."

"Or carry the baby?"

"Too risky."

"Then what in creation will he be good for? Where are the millions to come in?"

"I shall rent him out to break in new shoes."

A Big Difference, Usually.

Studious Boy—What is the meaning of "market value" and "intrinsic value?"

Father—The "market value" is the price you pay for a thing. "Intrinsic value" is what you get when you sell it to a second-hand dealer.

Scientists in Real Life.

First Passenger—Who is that man drinking from that rusty mug chained to the water-cooler?

Second Passenger—That is Professor De Science, author of "Disease Germs in the Communion Cup."

No Judge.

Young Artist—It's an outrage to have such an ignoramus as Puffers on a hanging committee.

Friend—No judge of art, eh?

Young Artist—He is a half-idiot. Why, sir, he thought my cows were horses.

Horrible.

St. Peter—You married for money I believe?

Fair Spirit—Y-e-s.

St. Peter—You may come in, but you will have to spend eternity with the man you married.

Hot Reception.

There was once a cat named Mariah,
Who to sing in high C did aspiah;
  In the midst of her wail
  Came of water a pail,
That had previously been near the fiah.

A Practical Dramatist.

Friend—Why do you kill off so many people in every act?

Dramatist—The company is small, and that is the only way I can work in all the characters.

The Doctor Silenced.

The Doctor—You regard society as merely a machine, do you? What part of the machinery do you consider me, for instance?

The Professor—You are one of the cranks.

Chose the Wrong One.

Bleeker—Say, old chap, that cigar you gave me yesterday was a dandy.

Baxter—How careless of me.

Fools From Birth.

He—The fact is that you women make fools of the men.

She—Sometimes, perhaps; but sometimes we don't have to.

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Links of Love.

(Continued from page seven.)

and fired upon, and I was severely wounded. I bear the scar yet. But I was not left to meet punishment for aiding a man to live; no, I was borne away in safety; my uncle and you, perhaps, and others, rushed upon us, and Gerald Grey defended himself. Before his fire my uncle fell. I was brought here, nursed most tenderly through long weeks of illness following my wound, and—"

"Became the mistress of Gerald Grey."

The tiny hand slipped from the back of the chair to her pocket, and reappeared with a small pistol. Bonnie Bessie had never gone without that weapon since her flight; she had a presentiment that she would need it some day.

"Leave at once, sir, or I will kill you in your tracks! Leave, I say!"

The man saw that the woman was in deadly earnest, and his face paled, and he essayed to speak.

"Not one word! If you do not instantly leave, I will fire."

It was no plaything she held in her hand, but a derringer—a deadly weapon—and with a curse the man turned on his heel and strode towards the gate.

There he halted and said:

"I'll have my revenge on you, girl, one of these days you shall hug to your heart the dead form of Gerald Grey!"

There was a flash, a report, and the man staggered back, his left arm shattered by a bullet.

With a curse he started towards the woman; but hurrying feet were heard approaching, and he turned and dashed away, and was soon lost to view.

This remarkable story of love and folly and crime will be continuer next week. All Ledger subscribers are entitled to our free cameras and patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

THE UNSEEN WOMAN.

BY G. B. BURGIN.

Half-way up the valley rose the Trappist Monastery of Mahota. Although the first snows of winter had just fallen, the Ottawa River was not yet frozen. In spite of the perpetual silence of the brethren, in the outbuildings of the monastery there were signs of active preparations for the coming cold. The cattle had been called up from distant fields, and the lay brother who usually spent the late summer and autumn peeling potatoes in the open air at the back of the monastery, now sought shelter by the kitchen stove from the keen cold of coming winter. On the hills surrounding the monastery serried rows of maples stood leafless and rigid, the dull green of occasional pines showing sombrely against the leaden sky. Habitants, bringing milk to the cheese factory, shook their heads knowingly as they prophesied the rapidly approaching snowfall—a blanket of white, which would shut them from the outer world until spring. The coming of the snow always brought with it a feeling of awe, although they were provisioned to stand a winter siege, and would lie as snugly in their little houses during the winter as squirrels in a nest.

Inside the monastery barn the monks were busily engaged fixing up stalls for the large herd of cows to be fed and sheltered there. Most of the monks had tied their brown robes round their waists; the only sounds which broke the stillness were the occasional buzz of a saw, or the ringing of a hammer on a nail head. The rules of their order forbade the monks to speak. They worked in silence, only leaving off at intervals to wipe the sweat from their brows as the monastery bell tolled every quarter of an hour to remind them that they were mortal. In the little burial ground of the monastery there was also a half-dug grave which served to fulfil the same purpose. When a monk feared death he went into the graveyard and lay down in the half-filled grave. Then he came back to his work and prayed in silence as he toiled.

It was a hard life of constant intercession, prayer and work. Most of the monks, who labored in the barn, bore upon their brows the seal of silence. Some faces were good, some bad, some divinely peaceful and happy, others diabolically wicked. But upon them all was the ineffaceable brand which separated them from their fellows. These men had voluntarily quitted the world for a living tomb; whether they regretted it or not, there was no retracing their steps. What use had the world for a man who was false to his obligation? If he left the monastery he would be shunned and despised; if he remained there, he condemned himself to perpetual silence, shut out all the sweetness of living, became, practically, a dead man who still walked the earth brooding over the wrongs or sufferings of his past life.

The monks entered their dormitories at 8, rose at 2 in the morning, and worshiped for three hours in the monastery chapel. Then they went forth into the fields after a scanty breakfast of bread and water, and labored until midday. There was a short rest for recreation after dinner, and the monotonous round began again until the evening meal. The cost of each monk's food was about a cent a day. The brethren made their own clothes and shoes. An absolute familiarity with death had robbed it of all terrors. If a monk died, he was carried coffinless in his brown robe to the graveyard, there

"To take his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill."

That was all. He was made one with nature, his place knew him no more.

When the noonday bell rang, Brother Hyacinthe, tall, swarthy, muscular, thin, laid down his saw with an air of relief, folded his hands, and walked slowly in the direction of the monastery. Once on the threshold, he raised his eyes to the sky with a despairing look, gave an expressive shrug of his brawny shoulders, and went down the long passage which led to the corridor where the monks assembled for their hour of recreation. Half way down the corridor he stopped to gaze through an open door—the door of a meanly-furnished little room in which a great stove gave out an overpowering heat. A mild-faced monk sat at a small table making robes for the brethren. Long strips of rough, heavy material out of which the robes were fashioned hung from nails on the wooden walls. Great irons were being heated at the stove to press the seams of an already completed robe. As Brother Hyacinthe looked into the room his eyes fell on the frail, stooping form of Brother Colombe. Brother Colombe was thin and worn from much fasting; he coughed patiently from time to time; his face was angelically sweet. When he looked up and met the fiery glance of Brother Hyacinthe, he crossed himself and turned away with a sigh.

It was easy to see that these two had met in the world, that there was some bond of love or hate between them from which neither could escape—some bond which was ever drawing them together—a bond made more bitter by the enforced silence of monastic days. Where one was, the other instinctively felt his presence. For years past the savage hate in Brother Hyacinthe's heart, in spite of prayer and penal scourge, ha dsteadily accumulated. By some strange chance, in that far distant world which was already half-blotted from their memories, they had loved the same woman. She had been equally false to both. Overcome by the raging madness of despair, and unknown to each other, they sought the Monastery of Mahota, there to escape all thought of this woman whom they loved—this woman who had slain them both as surely as though she had put the knife against their throats and gashed a gaping wound.

But even in the soul-killing routine of the monastery, there was no escape from her. When they prayed to the virgin, her eyes were the eyes of the woman they had loved; when they went forth into the fields to perform their daily tasks, she accompanied them, unseen, but ever present; when they returned through the dim shades of falling night, weary, footsore, half dead from fatigue, she walked between and drew them to her once again. Sometimes, Brother Hyacinthe saw her standing at the head of his pallet as the moonlight shone into the long dormitory and the midnight silence was broken by the restless sighing and coughing of his brother monks. Only at that time did Brother Colombe find peace, for, of a slighter build than Brother Hyacinthe, the toil, fasting and privations of the day wore out his frail body until he slept as soundly as a little child. Often, however, Brother Hyacinthe, rising from his pallet, and pacing with noiseless, tiger steps the wooden floor of the dormitory, raised his gnarled and knotted hands, muttering imprecations against this woman whom he hated. After these outbursts, however, he always sought the abbot, confessed his sin, did penance, and received absolution, only to struggle once more against the malign influence of the woman who had slain his soul. No woman was ever allowed to set foot in Mahota—no woman save one; and she came unbidden, unseen, was always between these two men who had fled from her and the world. It seemed as if she resented their escape from her toils, her Circean allurements, and had resolved that there should be no escape. Meek Brother Colombe bore his sufferings unflinchingly; when he thought of this woman, it was with childlike pity and love. Although he prayed unceasingly that her soul might once more become white, he inflicted upon himself the severest possible penance, always regarded her with loving tenderness and scourged his suffering body to win her future salvation.

Brother Hyacinthe passed slowly along the corridor, goaded to madness that Brother Colombe prayed for him; he did not want to be prayed for by Brother Colombe. There was still the memory of that woman between them, the woman who persecuted them both. He could see her now, the siren eyes, the gleaming white shoulders, the loveliness of her lips, the slender fingers which dragged him down to hell. He cursed her, and strode on. If he could only revisit the world, how he would rend her limb from limb, disfigure that fair face, crush her lying loveliness into the dust! If he could only meet her again! Only once! only once! He would take Brother Colombe's hot irons and sear her eyes out! Ah-h-h! If it were possible! If it were possible!

Brother Colombe put down the hot iron with which he had been pressing a newly-finished robe, and sighed. Slowly the retreating footsteps of Brother Hyacinthe died away. Then, Brother Colombe, laying aside his work, entered the corridor, and went straight to his favorite window seat where he was illuminating a missal with pictures of saints. For more than a month past, during this hour of recreation, he had painted the Holy Virgin and Child. Even in his dull heart there was a thrill of exultation as he thought how full of promise the painting was, how it needed but a few more strokes of the brush to be complete. What was his dismay as he drew near the window seat to find that some one had carelessly upset a glass of water over the missal, and that the labor of more than a month was practically ruined.

Brother Colombe sighed again, and prayed that he might not in his guilty heart deem this the work of an enemy. Then he took up his brushes and attempted to repair the damage.

He did not know that a few yards away, Brother Hyacinthe regarded him with intense hate, his cowl drawn well over his head, his eyes blazing like living coals. When Brother Hyacinthe saw the meek monk once more resume his labor, he folded his hands, and, with slow, measured steps withdrew. As he went out there were several lay brothers kneeling before the various Stations of the Cross, a ghostly light seemed full of fiery flame, for an irresistible temptation had suddenly taken possession of him. He could no longer endure the proximity of the man he hated—the man who had rendered it impossible for him to escape from all memory of the woman he still loved. He would ruin this man and himself at the same time and thus find a way to escape.

He stole silently through the long corridor. Perpetual vigils, the haunting presence of the Unseen Woman, the scanty food and appalling routine of his daily life, had done their work. For the moment he was insane, with all a madman's cunning.

Alone in the long stone corridor, he looked carefully around, but there was no one in sight, for the farm hands of the monastery had all gone to their midday meal. Even the swineherd was not to be seen. The only sound which broke the stillness was the dull, low moaning of the chapel bell; it semed to him that it knelled the passing of his own soul.

For a moment he hesitated, then stole quickly down the corridor, and, coming to the room where Brother Colombe had been at work, looked furtively in. There was no one there.

Before leaving the room, Brother Colombe had heaped fresh logs in the stove. They crackled and sputtered and cast a cheerful glow over the stone floor. The reflection of the flames danced upon the gloomy walls; the irons which Brother Colombe had placed in front of the stove were almost red-hot.

Brother Hyacinthe looked round with an air of satisfaction, seized several pieces of the rough, thick cloth, and a handful of shavings, and pushed them into the stove.

In a moment the cloth and shavings began to flare up. They would die away too quickly to do any harm.

He thrust one end of a long wooden bench in the stove, put the other end against the wooden wall, and went away. No one would come near the place for at least a quarter of an hour.

He returned to the corridor and surveyed Brother Colombe's half-nearted attempt at work with malicious satisfaction. So absorbed were the monks in their devotions that at first they noticed nothing; then, the acrid smell of burning cloth and wood brought them back to that earth from which they had so completely detached themselves. As the smoke grew thicker and thicker, they sudenly realized that the monastery was on fire, and, even in an emergency like this, not daring to speak, looked pitifully at one another. An ancient monk motioned to them to follow him, and one by one they glided away through the film of gray smoke to seek for water.

Brother Colombe was the last to leave the corridor. He had suddenly become absorbed in his efforts to repair the damage done to the painting, and was insensible to the approach of the fire until the smoke entered his nostrils and made him cough. When he looked up, he found himself in a world of gray smoke, through which flashed the fiery eyes of Brother Hyacinthe.

As Brother Hyacinthe pointed a menacing finger in the direction of Brother Colombe's little room, it suddenly dawned on the good monk that he was responsible for the catastrophe which had happened. Hastily rising from his knees, he spread a sheet of paper over his beloved painting and glided through the gray mist towards the door. He was unable to find it.

When he looked around in bewilderment, the eyes of Brother Hyacinthe still glared fiercely at him.

Again he felt along the walls and again missed the door. When he looked up, Brother Hyacinthe was beside him. The rules of their order forbade speech; but if ever human eyes spoke eloquently they were the eyes of Brother Colombe as he gazed up at Brother Hyacinthe and placed a trembling hand upon his arm.

Brother Hyacinthe shook off Brother Colombe's fingers as if they burned him, and opened the door. Brother Colombe followed him thankfully, under the delusion that Brother Hyacinthe was endeavoring to save him.

Once outside the door, Brother Hyacinthe led the way along the corridor, occasionally thrusting out an unwilling hand to drag Brother Colombe forward.

After what seemed an interminable space of time, they reached Brother Colombe's little room, in which the fire raged fiercely. Outside, they heard the wild clanging of the monastery bell as it gave the alarm to the surrounding villages. The narrow stream of water in the valley had run nearly dry; there were only two large wells in front of the monastery. A windlass creaked as the water was slowly drawn to the top. The buckets seemed pitifully small.

Tongues of flame leaped through the thickening smoke-wreaths. "At last! at last!" thundered Brother Hyacinthe. "The devil hath delivered you into my hands at last!" His long, lean, sinewy fingers closed round Brother Colombe's throat.

Brother Colombe made no resistance. His last thought was a prayer for the soul of the woman he had once loved with an earthly passion. In the agony of imminent death he now saw her clad in the raiment of the Shining Ones. Her eyes looked into his with tender love; they implored pardon, forgiveness, were full of sorrow for the sins of earth.

Brother Hyacinthe shifted his hold and grasped Brother Colombe round the waist to cast him into the blazing room. Suddenly he let go his grip and staggered against the doorway.

A white hand thrust him into the fiery furnace, he fell backward, the flames swallowed him up.

Brother Colombe felt himself grasped by the soft hand of a woman. She laid a finger on his lips as she led him forth from the flames. At the touch of her healing fingers, he opened his eyes and saw the gates of the Celestial City.

A little distance away, despairing monks dashed buckets of water against the monastery walls.

He was alone.

Quality Not an Issue.

Reginald—Won't you sing for us, Miss Muriel?

Miss M.—Oh, I daren't sing after such good music as we've been having.

Reginald (gallantly)—But I'd rather listen to your singing than to any amount of good music.

Not New.

Lady of the House (impressively)—Bridget, that pitcher you broke this morning belonged to my great grandmother.

Bridget (greatly relieved)—Well, O'im glad o' that! Shure, Oi was afraid it wuz somethin' yez had just bought lately.

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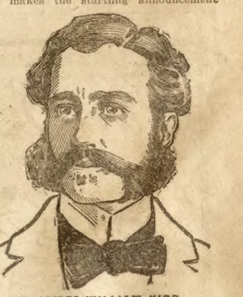

DR. JAMES WILLIAM KIDD.

that he has surely discovered the elixir of life. That he is able with the aid of a mysterious compound, known only to himself, produced as a result of the years he has spent in searching for this precious life-giving boon, to cure any and every disease that is known to the human body. There is no doubt of the doctor's earnestness in making his claim and the remarkable cures that he is daily effecting seem to bear him out very strongly. His theory which he advances is one of reason and based on sound experience in a medical practice of many years. It costs nothing to try his remarkable "Elixir of Life," as he calls it, for he sends it free, to anyone who is a sufferer, in sufficient quantities to convince of its ability to cure, so there is absolutely no risk to run. Some of the cures cited are very remarkable, and but for reliable witnesses would hardly be credited. The lame have thrown away crutches and walked about after two or three trials of the remedy. The sick, given up by home doctors, have been restored to their families and friends in perfect health. Rheumatism, neuralgia, stomach, heart, liver, kidney, blood and skin diseases and bladder troubles disappear as by magic. Headaches backaches, nervousness, fevers, consumption, coughs, colds, asthma, catarrh, bronchitis and all affections of the throat, lungs or any vital organs are easily overcome in a space of time that is simply marvelous. It purifies the entire system, blood and tissue, restores normal nerve power, circulation and a state of perfect health is produced at once. To the doctor all systems are alike and equally affected by this great "Elixir of Life." Send for the remedy today. It is free to every sufferer. State what you want to be cured of and the sure remedy for it will be sent you free, by return mail.

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Frank Vaughan's Mistake.

"It is no use, Edith; we can never be more to each other than we are now. We are both poor, and, in addition, I am up to the collar-bone in debt."

"But—but you love me?" she asked, timidly.

"Love! Bah! What is love? A nonsensical caprice. Born today, dead tomorrow. Perhaps I did love you once; but—well, one can't live on sentiment. One day our feelings lead us astray; next, stern circumstance compels us to be more philosophical. We have both been wrong; you for loving me, and I for being foolish enough to encourage it. But, Edith, our clandestine coutrship must cease from tonight. You are but the governess, you know, while I—well, society expects great things from me. You must see how absurd a thought marriage is for us."

"Absurd!" she murmured, scarcely realizing that such levity and cruelty were possible from the man to whom she had confided her trust some months before.

"Yes, utterly absurd. Now, be sensible. Look at the matter in a reasonable light. I don't want to hurt your feelings, you know, but you are aware that your position in my uncle's house would of itself ridicule the idea of marriage between us. Of course, you will always have a friend in me. I shall always be glad to advise, and——"

"Frank!" she interrupted.

"Don't be hysterical, Edith There's really no need for any fuss, you know. You are poor; so am I. But I have a position to maintain. You haven't. Come, let us put an end to our foolishness. There's George Markham, the young clergyman, you know. He's head over ears in love with you, and—and you wouldn't have any difficulty with him. He'd make a good husband, and—all that sort of thing."

The poor deluded girl hung her head in silence. Her breast heaved tumultuously as she endeavored to suppress her emotion. She trembled in every limb, and for a brief moment the tears stood in her fine, blue eyes. But Edith Malvern, the poor, friendless little governess, had more philosophy in her nature than the heartless man walking by her side in his uncle's grounds gave her credit for.

This was a staggering blow to her. To have her hopes dashed to the ground, and her heart stabbed with one sudden, unexpected lunge, was torture in the extreme. But there was that within her which enabled her to hold her feelings in check. Such words were concentrated cruelty and bitterness. But they had unlocked and opened a capacity within her heart which she had previously been unaware existed there. It was the power to feel and to be thankful for what she had escaped from. A man whose opinions of love and of marriage—the most sacred passion and bond in the universe—were so absolutely debased, must be worthless. To have been compelled to call such a man "husband" would have been, to one of her nature, more fearful than this sudden shattering of her hopes. Had she discovered his hateful, true inwardness after she had been irrevocably yoked to him, her life would have been one prolonged misery.

Calmly she withdrew her hand from his arm. Her grief seemed suddenly assuaged. She paused by his side, and, looking steadily into his face, said:

"It shall be as you wish. Yes; I have been foolish. I am, as you have said, poor, and of no account in the world. I am parentless as well as penniless. It—it would be—absurd to think of marriage. Let us forget the past—be as though we had never met. Your words have forever obliterated the past in my mind. I could not, I would not, be your wife, though all the world urged me to it. But your debts, your position! How are you going to extricate yourself from the one and maintain the other?"

"How unsophisticated you are, Edith."

"But you surely do not intend to make marriage your emancipator?" she asked.

He smiled at her earnest, pitying, semi-credulous look, and then replied:

"Well, perhaps such a proposal seems—a—peculiar to you; but, my dear girl, look at things sensibly. There's Mary, for instance, my cousin. She's an heiress. I believe she—well, thinks a great deal about me. You must have seen it, Edith. Now——"

"But, for pity's sake, think of what you are going to do. Do not deceive and betray Miss Mary. Pause before you attempt to win her love for such sordid ends. Is it not enough that you should chill one heart, without deliberately breaking another? She is of such a disposition that when she discovered—as she undoubtedly would some day—that you had more regard for her wealth than for herself, it would kill her. I entreat you, consider. For myself, I care not; I can bear the revelation. But Mary—no, she shall not be thus deceived. Oh, consider!"

* * * * * * *

There was a great deal of consideration in Frank Vaughan's nature. He was full of it. But, unfortunately, it was all for himself. He did consider Mary, truly, but not in the manner enjoined by the noble girl he had deceived. He considered his cousin a Heaven-sent blessing. She was a good match. With plenty of money in her own right from her deceased mother, and as heiress to her father's great accumulations, she was just the wife for him. True, she was a trifle slow, but then, that would not matter. She could follow the bent of her own inclinations, and, with her money, he could do the same. On the whole, Edith had taken things very calmly. Ah! she was sensible. It would have done no good to create any fuss, as he had told her. He had certainly expected her to shed a tear, because he had thought she had given her heart to him. But then, women's hearts are very flexible things. In fact, women themselves are. Of course, they don't feel things like men do. Those who write so glibly about broken hearts don't understand the sex. He did. Of course, women may feel a touch of disappointed pride when their lover discards them; but pain, oh, it's impossible, ridiculous!

That was the cynical way in which Frank Vaughan's reasoning worked. Not another thought of Edith. He had got out of a very difficult and delicate affair somewhat easily. So far, so good. No one was aware that there had been anything between them. So much the better. Edith was not the one to proclaim their—flirtation—from the housetops. And now? Well, now for Mary, of course.

Things seemed to go very smoothly and pleasantly with Mary. Frank found her even more susceptible than he had imagined. Ah, not much difficulty here. How pleased she was with his attentions! How she lingered over the pleasant, artful phrases he whispered to her day by day. How impressionable she was! She would be ripe for a proposal in no time.

And Edith! Poor girl, as the weeks went by she noted the effect this man was producing in his cousin. If love was not already full grown in Mary, it was in embryo. What should she do? Edith boldly related all that had passed between herself and Frank, and detailed that final, cruel conversation word for word, and Mary listened with pity. She put her arms around Edith's neck and kissed her in gratitude and sympathy.

Two days afterward she and Frank were alone in the grounds. Seated in almost the same spot as Edith and he had stood in when his chill words had frozen her heart, Frank took Mary's hand in his, and, bending over her, told her of his love, and asked her to become his wife. He was surprised, startled at her answer:

"Love!" she exclaimed, with a light laugh. "What is love? A nonsensical caprice. Born today—dead tomorrow."

"But not such love as mine, Mary," said he. "Do you not love me?"

"Love you! Well, perhaps I did once, but—well, one can't live on sentiment, you know. Besides, you know, Frank, you are only a briefless lawyer, penniless, and in debt, while I am an heiress, and society expects great things from me."

Surely he had a recollection of some such words as these! Where had he heard them? Where? Great heavens! These were the very words he had uttered to Edith.

"But, Mary," he continued, "say that you love me. Say that you will be my wife. Once married to you, my darling, my life shall be——"

"Married!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Frank, you must see how absurd the thought of marriage between us is. Now, do look at things sensibly, and please, oh, please, don't let us have any fuss. Of course, you will always have a friend in me. I shall always be glad to advise——"

But the summing up and verdict of this stern little judge was too much for Frank Vaughan. He was beside himself almost.

A week later Edith Malvern overtook Frank in the grounds. He seemed moody and morose, and turned away his head as she approached. But Edith approached and laid her hand upon his arm. He turned a severe frown on her.

"Mr. Vaughan," she said, "I—I would like to speak to you. Can—can you give me a moment?"

"No."

"But do you not remember you once said that you would always be pleased to advise me? See, I have had a letter from some lawyer in Montana, and it appears I am not without friends. My uncle, whom I have never seen since I was a child, has recently died in Lewistown, and I am his heiress, and——"

"Eh, what's that?" He turned sharply enough now.

"It appears he has left me a fortune of two hundred thousand dollars, and I want you to advise me what to do——"

"To do? Why, Edith, my darling, my advice is to get married at once," and he smiled such unutterable things, and held out his arms to take her to his breast. But she avoided him.

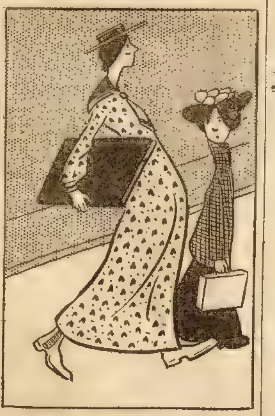
"Oh," said she, "I am glad to hear you say so. Your advice is so near my own idea, Frank."

"Of course, pet, you knew I was only in fun when I said those cruel things, didn't you? Yes, dearie, you must be married at once."

"Yes; that is just what George thinks. I promised to be Mr. Markham's wife last night, Frank, and he says it would be better for us to be married at once, so that he can take me out to Montana."

Want of sufficient supply of asterisks and notes of exclamation prevents us from chronicling Frank Vaughan's reply.

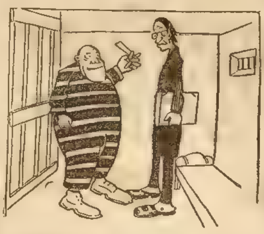
The Reason of It.



The Tall One—All the people stare at us so.

The Short One—That must be because we are so pretty.

He Did.



Visitor—Don't you ever long for better things?

Inmate—Sure! I'd give two years o' me life fur a file in place o' this blarsted jackknife.

Poe and the Manager.

A well-known theatrical manager, who is distinguished rather for his business ability than for his knowledge of literature, was visited not long ago by an aspiring playwright. He had with him, he explained to the manager, the manuscript of a play based on one of Edgar Allan Poe's stories, which he was sure was destined to make a sensational hit on the stage. The manager consented to hear the play and listened with increasing interest as the playwright read from his manuscript.

He was enthusiastic when the end was reached.

"That's fine!" he exclaimed. "Fine! Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. You and Mr. Poe come in tomorrow and we'll talk this thing over."

Rather than climb the golden stairs to heaven some people find it easier to slide down the banister to the other place.

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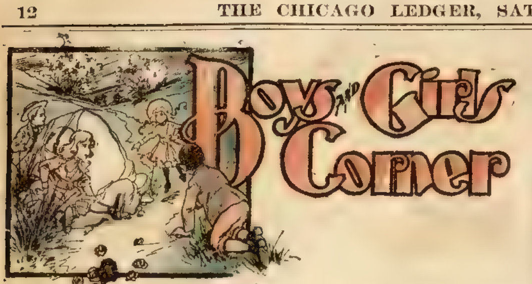

Adrift on a Junk; Or, Boy Sailors of the China Sea.

By St. George Rathborne.

Begun in No. 29, July 18. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GHOST THAT GROANED.

It was now Julian's privilege to translate what he received from Kwang Chow just as he had seen the captain receiving certain signals from another ship, and by referring to his code-book making common English of the flags.

"He says the junk is haunted," was the first astonishing translation with which he favored his expectant audience; whereat Tressie uttered a cry of delight, for it had always been her secret ambition to interview one genuine ghost; while Bob on the other hand was mortally afraid of anything bordering on the supernatural, and accordingly gave a gasp of horror at learning he was now in a position where he might have to face such an apparition.

"He says he was bent on searching the quarters of the sailors, in the hope of finding a bit of forgotten opium with which to ease his toothache—anyhow, a poor excuse is better than none, and we'll take it for granted that he had the toothache, poor fellow, though I wager it's frightened away by now—and was prying under every bunk energetically, when he heard a most awful groan, which he says was the worst ever and Kwang ought to know, for I guess he's run across some pretty tough ones in his time.

"Of course you know that the Chinese are mighty superstitious, and believe in a personal devil that is always hovering near to do a fellow a bad turn. They call this Evil Spirit the Fung-Shuy, or something like that, and everything is done to appease or confuse him and his imps—at a funeral clouds of red paper with marks on every one, are scattered about, under the impression that the old fellow is curious, and will stop to pick up every bit, giving the body a chance to get in the grave first. Oh, they are an interesting lot, I'm telling you right now.

"Very well; now here's our friend Kwang Chow, who vows the devil is lying below, waiting to get hold of us one by one; and what worries him so badly is the fact that he hasn't any of those prayer papers to offer the old fellow in order to keep him guessing until we can get off the boat."

Julian laughed aloud as he finished speaking, and the girl followed suit; but Bob looked quite serious.

"Yes; but he heard something," he asserted, shaking his head.

"Perhaps we can cut up some stuff, and make prayer-papers," suggested Julian, with fine irony.

"Come now, this is no joking matter, old fellow. Do you expect to go down and see what scared the poor chap?" asked Bob, coloring.

"Right away, and I half expected to find that some pet cat or dog has been left behind when the crew took French leave; or it may be we'll run across a sick Chinaman in his bunk, for those rascals wouldn't think anything of leaving a chum to his fate."

"Perhaps down with the plague—ugh!" groaned Bob, dismally.

"Oh, stop that croaking and come with me. I saw a lantern in the cabin, that will answer our purpose, even if it is a tough proposition."

"Then you want me to go along; of course, I'm willing enough, but who's to look after the ship when we're all below; what if a squall or something came up suddenly with the tiller lashed that way? Why, we'd all get drowned before you could call out, 'Long live the king.' It's for you to say, though, Skipper," with a sad look of dejection that made Julian grin with delight.

"I want to go with Julian; please let me," said Tressie, at this juncture, and she would not take no for an answer, evidently.

"Well, come on, then, Miss Second Mate, and we'll interview that old ghost or know the reason why."

"I'll get the lantern," she cried, darting back into the cabin.

Bob looked a bit foolish, but his feelings were dreadfully harried, and he hurried over to the stern and seized the tiller so eagerly that one might have fancied a black squall must be bearing down upon them at race-horse speed, whereas the sky was as clear as crystal, and not a whiff of danger anywhere around.

Kwang now realized what they were about to do, and really the poor fellow was greatly concerned over the possible sad fate of the young American whom he had come to worship as his patron saint; he begged him not to go, and finding his prayers unavailing, by a great effort conquered his fears, which were a part of his very nature, having been handed down from remote ancestors, and made out to follow the adventurous pair into the depths.

Perhaps it was a novelty about the thing that attracted his curiosity, for never in all his experience had he known human beings to thus defy the dreaded evil spirit who ever watched to get the better of poor mortals here below.

Now, Julian was not entirely free from anxiety, though he may not have have shown it to the others; but he could not say what it was that had frightened the Chinaman. What Bob had said about the black plague had not been reassuring, either, for he knew that scourge was prevailing in certain quarters, and it was even possible that its appearance on board the junk had caused the sudden flight of the crew, and not as he supposed the fear of the vessel sinking. That was a pleasant prospect, truly

Once below the deck, he advanced slowly, holding in one hand the rude native lantern, fashioned somewhat like those used a century or two back in old England, while the other hand gripped that ferocious Bashi Bazook blade of the needle point and keen edge, with which he felt he could give a good account of himself in conflict with even a phantom.

The place was stuffy, and the odor worse than in the cabin, proving that it did come from opium or hemp-seed being smoked so constantly that everything was saturated with its villainous smell.

All was silent save the customary sounds one might expect to hear when a ship or a junk is moving at a fair clip through the water.

"Bring on your ghosts," said Julian, dramatically waving his polished weapon before him after the manner of one who dares a despised antagonist to advance and give battle.

At that moment as if in answer to his challenge there was a distinct moaning sound close by, of a character to make Bob' flesh creep, had he been present to hear it

Tressie clapped her hands faintly, as though delighted because after all the affair was not to turn out quite a fizzle; which action surprised the sailor lad not a little, for he believed the girl must be a shade more valiant than himself.

"Where was that grunt?" he demanded, quickly, his "sword" held at an angle best fitted to impale any charging enemy.

"To the left, in the lower bunk," came immediately from Tressie, whose bright eyes were flashing with excitement and eagerness.

Our young knight never hesitated an instant; he knew he dared not, unless he were content to let a girl reach the point of danger ahead of him; but advanced directly to the several bunks on the left, holding out his lantern so as to have the benefit of its illumination.

Well, there was something in that lower bunk beyond a shadow of a doubt; and while Julian did not have a very perfect idea as to what the dreaded bad spirit of the Chinese might be like, he felt positive that this looked too much after the style of a human being to be anything supernatural.

Then he made a startling discovery that aroused his curiosity still more, for he found that the figure in the lower bunk was tied securely with withes, after a beastly highbinder method, so that he was utterly unable to more than move; and possibly some instrument of torture, such as only a Chinaman could invent, prevented him from making a sound beyond a groan.

This relieved his mind of a horror he had felt in connection with contagious disease, and he no longer hesitated to touch the party, though the rags and tatters made him shudder.

Taking hold, he dragged the unknown out upon the floor, so that he might be better able to cut his bonds.

To his amazement, he looked upon the bearded face of a foreigner, perhaps an Anglo-Saxon, though abuse had made him a shadow of what he once might have been.

He had his eyes open, and saw the gleam of the steel as the blade was drawn across the withes; perhaps he imagined his end must have come, for he closed his eyes suddenly at about the instant his bonds fell off.

Casting aside the weapon when it had carried out its part in the rescue, Julian bent over the poor fellow, uttering words of good cheer; but it was to deaf ears he addressed himself, for evidently his patient had fainted.

"Get Bob down here to help me carry him on deck," he said to the girl, who immediately darted forth on her errand of mercy, filled with pity for the poor victim of the Chinese pirates.

Bob came hastily, even if he did cast wary glances to the right and to the left as if in fear of Kwang's pet devil.

Willingly he took hold and between them the unconscious stranger was lugged from the foul-smelling forecastle up on to the deck.

Here in the shade of the sail they laid him down, where the cooling breeze might fan his bearded cheeks and help revive him.

Bob ran for some water, but before he got back the man's eyes opened again, and he looked up into Julian and Tressie's faces with amazement and delight.

"Is it a dream?" he muttered, trembling with eagerness.

Julian assured him it was not, and that himself and companions were truly of flesh, that they had been wrecked, and had found the drifting junk just in time to save them-

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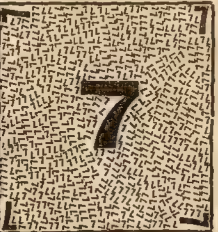

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selves from a watery grave, and that they gladly welcomed another unfortunate to their ranks—if food or water would give him immediate satisfaction he had only to mention his wishes to have them granted. Whereupon, the poor chap actually wept, he was so tickled over the wonderful change that had taken place in his prospects.

Kwang, who had stared open-mouthed while they were carrying his Fung-Shuy out of the depths, now ran to bring water, and Tressie also sped to the cook's galley, where the fire still burned, and she could speedily get something calculated to give the abandoned sailor immediate succor.

Truly, he must have been enchanted with the outlook, and believed his lines had fallen in pleasant places, after enduring such horrors as fall to the lot of few mortals here below, whatever may be kept for them after death.

Julian could see unmistakable signs that the unfortunate had been a sailor at some time in his past, and it was only natural that his heart should go out to him with unusual force; because he, too, had a father in exile, supposed to be enduring tortures among the cruel natives of the South China coast.

What if this man should prove to possess some knowledge of that dear one whom he sought; what a miraculous thing it would be that he of all persons had been appointed to rescue him from death.

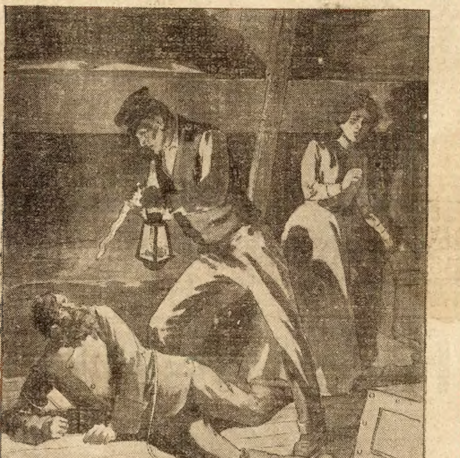
"You have been a prisoner among evil men, I take it?" he could not keep from asking, with the light of anticipation in his eyes.

The man nodded, though his ability to speak was fast returning, as his exclamation at sight of them proved.

"Has it been very long since you fell into their hands?" continued Julian.

"All of seven years, sir," returned the hairy one.

The boy began to tremble, for it was just about that length of time since his father had disappeared from the face of the earth, and was last seen in this locality; could it be that this man would prove to be a messenger, sent by a merciful Heaven, to tell him the story, and remove the mystery that had so long been a torture to his soul?



To his amazement, he looked upon the bearded face of a foreigner.

"And the name of your ship? Can you tell me that?" he asked, weakly, while the sailor surveyed his emotion with wonder.

"Aye, that I can, young sir, and I never want to sail the blue seas in a better craft than was the old Evangeline."

Julian swallowed something that seemed to stick in his throat; for that had been the name of his father's ship, the luckless one on which he had taken his fatal voyage that had proved his last cruise.

"Tell me, are you Mate Merriweather?" he managed to ask, with quivering lips.

"Ajax Merriweather it was, though so many years have dragged by since last I heard it spoken that I began to doubt. But how should you know? Wherever have I met so likely a young lad as you? Seven years, sure, you'd have been but a small chap that far back."

Julian had groped for the hard hand of the bearded man, and when he found it he squeezed it fiercely, while he was saying, brokenly:

"Oh, Mate Merriweather, don't you know, I'm the boy who gave you the knife on your birthday, and who rode on your shoulders when a little chap? Now you understand—I'm Julian!" he cried, for there was an answering pressure that told of awakened recollection.

The man staggered to his feet, holding on to the bamboo boom, for such was his excitement that he could no longer remain there on the deck.

"Julian, you Julian, the Captain's lad? Such a tall and manly fellow, it doesn't seem possible; it's hard to believe," he kept muttering, all the while his eyes remained glued on the face that was so filled with eager hope.

"But it is, all the same, and this is a happy hour for me. Now, I may know the truth and be rid of this agony of torture. Tell me, is he yet alive?"

His whole soul seemed wrapped up in the question, and no doubt his very heart stopped beating, such was the suspense under which he labored.

"He was, two weeks ago, when I escaped from the island. More than that, I'm unable to say, lad; but the chances are ten to one the Captain is still in the land o' the living!" answered the other, heartily.

Julian staggered back as weak as the emancipated man before him, for joy is able to steal one's strength as well as sorrow; and it was a wonderful revelation to this brave lad to hear that after they had mourned these seven years for the good captain who came not back after his vessel disappeared in the treacherous China Sea, the parent whom he had loved so well was not dead, but yet abode in the flesh, a forlorn captive, it seemed, but, thank Heaven, still alive and yearning after his dear ones across the seas.

CHAPTER XIV.

MATE MERRIWETHER'S STORY.

Tressie had heard all this with wonder and delight, for she knew about the strange mission that had brought Julian so far away from his home across the wide sea. Perhaps in his happiness she saw her own misery the more plainly, for had she not been deprived of a father's affection recently; but, brave girl that she was, this feeling found no expression in words or looks to mar the new-found ecstacy of her young champion and protector.

She was close by in the galley making sandwiches while the coffee heated, and every word came plainly to her ears.

Presently Julian recovered to some degree, and was able to ask questions, and the way in which he bombarded Merriwether with these kept that old salt busy framing answers.

Then Tressie called them all into the cabin to have supper, as the evening was close at hand, and over this meal the late prisoner of the buccaneers was made to repeat all he had said, and add to it such facts as had any bearing on the subject.

Thus by degrees they had the whole story, and Julian hung on everything that had a connection with his father, much as a miser might huddle over his shining gold. Picture to yourself, if you can, what his emotions must have been under such strange circumstances, and surely it will appear that he had good reason for unusual excitement, that caused all other things to drift away from his mind.

Long they sat around listening as though entranced, while Merriwether told how the ship was wrecked, leaving himself, the captain and several others of the crew in the hands of those who plied the trade of wreckers when fortune blew hot, and who varied life with more or less piratical business when the opportunity came their way, and a luckless ship was becalmed off the coast.

The life they led among these wild spirits it would take days to describe; and he only gave them a few glimpses of its most striking features, leaving the balance for future occasions; but there was enough to show how savagely they had been treated, how they were forced to work like slaves, and what agonies they suffered mentally, the captain especially on account of his family, over their inability to escape from their masters.

These lawless people were a mixture of Chino-Malay blood, making about as villainous a combination as could be imagined; indeed, Mate Merriwether declared their

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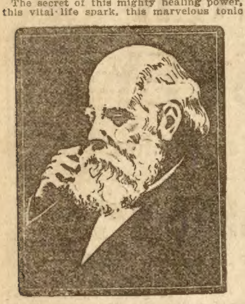
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Remember, it matters not how old you are; it matters not how you lost your manhood, or when you lost it. It matters not what doctors or scoffers say. This is no ordinary drug or stimulating method of treatment, but it is the vital spark of life itself, and it matters not how many remedies and doctors have failed, I have repeatedly and instantly renewed the youth of old men. My secret compound never fails. I have often instilled into jaded men new vitality, health and strength. For worn-out men I have oft kindled, in an instant, and to stay, the sparkling vitality of youth. My private address is Dr. C. Sargent Ferris, 10 Strawn Building, Cleveland, Ohio, and I urge every weak man to come to me for I will give him undying strength, the supreme joy and happiness of perfect manliness. My wondrous discovery has startled the world by its miraculous effects, yet I seek not fame nor glory. It suffices me if I may be the humble instrument of Nature's greatest power in bringing all men into the enjoyment of their true manliness and I do it free. In the time allotted to me here on earth I shall do all that in my power lies to give my fellow-men the benefit of this great secret and my reward shall be in the knowledge that I have done unto others as I would that others should do unto me.

CARDS & DICE Perfect Work. Catalog FREE. J. KNAUTH & Co., Eau Claire, Wis.

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RODS The latest improved; sold under guarantee. Used for locating mines, lost treasures, etc. Cir. two cents. Address: L. A. LOWRY, P.O. Box 1801-00, DENVER, Colo.

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J. P. Those suffering from weaknesses which sap the pleasures of life should take Juven Pills. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever been offered. Sent by mail in plain package only on receipt of this advertisement and $1.

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equal for treachery and murderous qualities did not exist on the face of the earth, and surely a man who had spent thirty years sailing the seas, from the Arctic regions all the way to Patagonia and New Zealand, associating with almost every known species of mankind, ought to know.

Then he told of several desperate attempts which he and the Captain had made toward escaping, and what hard luck seemed to follow them always, so that they were dragged back into bondage again, and treated more severely on account of having given their captors so much trouble.

Never had Captain Roxbury entirely lost his faith in a kind Providence, and he it had been who had raised the despondent spirits of his friend when the situation looked blackest.

"He's the grandest Christian gentleman on the face of the earth," declared Merriwether, enthusiastically, when he had related how his captain cared for him during a visitation of the plague to the camp, when men and women were dying all around them; and it may be certain that Julian mentally echoed all the praise he showered on the brave one who shrank not from the duty which had devolved upon him.

Finally Merriwether, at the solicitation of Bob, who was content now to let Kwang Chow steer, while he hung entranced over the story-teller, started to relate the more recent event, as to how he had managed to escape, and with his usual bad luck, fallen once more into the hands of the pirates who manned the Half-Moon.

"I didn't want to go a bit, without the Captain, but he commanded me to try, for if I got away I could send an expedition to rescue him. You see, he was kept in chains after our last escape, that is at night when we weren't working, and it was impossible for me to get him free, while I had a chance myself to seize a boat and cut for it.

"Finally the time came when I had to say farewell, and it nigh broke my heart, for you see we had been all in all to one another seven years, and before that always good friends; but he forced me to accept my chance, and I left him there. God knows my heart nearly broke, lad, but he would not listen to a refusal, and I swore that if I got away nothing under Heaven would keep me from coming back to save him if still alive, or at the worst to avenge.

"I was followed and chased among the islands just as you would follow a hare in the scrub; sometimes they thought they had me, when by turning on my tracks I'd give the beggars the slip. For days they let me have no chance to get out in the open, but I never showed the white feather, and kept working my boat here and there, hiding in the daytime when I could, skipping here and there in the dark, trying to get by; till at last the time came, and I made a desperate dash for it, as my stock of grub was running low, and something had to happen or my game was busted.

"I was unlucky, for they got wind of me, and this junk followed close at my heels; but through the whole night and into the next day I slipped along like a ghost, always just ahead of their fingers, dodging as only a sailor born and bred knows how to do. It was a rare old chase, lad, and only for the big hazard on it I'd have enjoyed the thing immensely; but I was playing for his life and mine, and so you see that took the fun out of it all.

"Many times they banged away at me with their gingal and some matchlocks they had; but I laid low whenever I saw them getting ready, and the only damage was to my sails or the hull of my rickety boat.

"I don't how the game would have ended, for if I could have kept free till dark again I stood some chance of running off; but as misfortune had it, an hour or so before sunset there came a sudden puff of wind so furious that as I was dodging under the hull at the time to escape a shower of lead, it tore me around with a whirl, and the beggarly craft capsized.

"That cooked my goose, to be sure, and it wasn't long before they yanked me out of the drink, and pounded me with savage delight. I really believe the scoundrels would have killed me on the spot, they were that mad, only the wind turned into a gale and that into a typhoon that promised to send us all to Davy Jones' locker in a hurry.

"Well, they triced me up as you found me, and stuck me in a bunk just as if I was a mummy like those I've seen in Egypt; and there I've lain ever since, thinking a thousand times my last hour had come, and then gaining a little hope when the old hooker kept her sea-legs through it all.

"I knew when the crew deserted, for it was shouted that the junk was foundering, and the wildest terror arose, when men forgot they were human beings, and fought like beasts to get into the boats.

"Fools that they were, when the chances were ten times as good on board; yet with that panic among them they could not reckon, and consequently went to their fate, for the sea was something awful at the time they shoved off.

"What I thought and what I suffered are things never to be told, but after going through what I had for seven long years I was able to crush down any weakness and face my fate decently.

"Sometimes I dozed, but whether for minutes or hours I couldn't tell you, only that I seemed to be gradually getting numb about the limbs, as though paralyzed by the tight cords, which nothing I could do would break.

"I knew when you came aboard, but thought it must be the crew returned by some strange freak of fate; and by that time I was caring mighty little about such things; for when a man has only a choice between death and the misery of a slave life among such surroundings as that piratical nest, he's ready to accept his billet with resignation.

"And then, dear boys, the joy that nearly overwhelmed me when first I heard English spoken at my side. It seemed to me my heart would swell up and burst with delight; yet for the life of me I couldn't imagine who you were; and then again I feared it was only my poor brain wandering, for many times I had thought I heard steps somewhere about the junk, when not a living soul could be within twenty miles of me.

"Now, that's the story in a nutshell, my boys, and you know how I chanced to be in the nasty fix as you found me. Though I hoped to return for my Captain with a British man-o'-war and blow their accursed village to smithereens, still I accept even this chance to rescue him; and the fact that it's his boy who heads the expedition fills my heart with emotion.

"Depend on it we'll make a desperate effort to carry him off, and something seems to tell me success is going to reward us. I can imagine what happiness must come to my old shipmate when he finds that the little chap he was never tired of talking about has grown into a fine fellow, and launched out into the world to look his father up."

So Mate Merriwether talked and the red crept into Julian's cheeks under his lavish praise, though he could not see how he merited it; for surely he had done next to nothing as yet, save to start on his search; and according to his mind no decent lad could ever have been contented to remain at home, enjoying the fruits of peace, while it was whispered that his beloved parent was at that hour held as a slave by the unruly spirits haunting the pestilential shores of Southern China.

As yet, of course, their plans were vague enough; but it was understood that could they but gain shelter among the islands where Merriwether beat about so long when mocking the pursuit of the enemy, they might remain in hiding until the time was propitious to make a swoop down on the pirate stronghold and accomplish their work.

Much would have to be left to the man who had been thrown upon their hands in such a remarkable manner; and as he knew the whole region, after living in the hands of the natives seven long years, they could profit by it to dodge discovery.

Already the very possibility of success thrilled Julian, and in imagination he could see himself in the arms of that dear one so long given up as dead. Oh, the blessed opportunity that had come to him, how thankful he should be over this Providential meeting with Mate Merriwether; and that worthy already looked twice the man he was when they found him, pinched, half-starved, and wholly given up to despair, for there is nothing that puts new life in a man more than warm food and the society of friends.

This was especially true with a poor fellow who had not heard English spoken save by his fellow prisoner, for long years that stretched behind him like a hideous nightmare.

Tressie had hung on every word, as though entranced, for she rejoiced in the great happiness that seemed looming up for her new-found friend, to whom she felt she owed so much. Bravely she tried to forget her own bitter woe, in order that her lonely condition should not keep Julian from enjoying his richly deserved prospects.

Already had he assured the little waif that in case her parent was never again to turn up, she would always find a home with his mother and sisters, of whom he had never wearied of telling; and it was little wonder then that Tressie loved the tall lad like a brother.

While they thus talked and formed plans, the day was closing in around them, and the sturdy old junk boomed straight along

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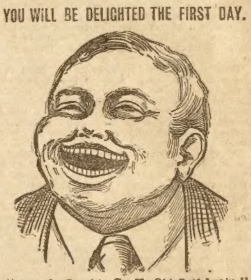
Weak Men Can Have It Free by Sending Name and Address — Imparts Strength and Vigor for Life.

YOU WILL BE DELIGHTED THE FIRST DAY.


"Feels So Good to Be My Old Self Again."

How any man may quickly cure himself after years of suffering from sexual weakness, lost vitality, night losses, varicocele, etc., and enlarge small weak organs to full size and vigor. Simply send your name and address to Dr. Knapp Medical Co., 2270 Hull Bldg., Detroit, Mich., and they will gladly send the free receipt with full directions so any man may easily cure himself at home.

If you are not troubled with sexual weakness don't write. But if you are weak, have shrunken organs or night losses write at once, as the remedy will give instant relief. You will feel stronger and vigorous from the very start. This is certainly a most generous offer, and the following, taken from their daily mail, shows what men think of their generosity.

"Dear Sirs:—The result could not have been better. I noticed a warm feeling, as of returning life, an exquisite experience of renewed power, the first day I used your treatment and I cannot withhold an expression of gratitude to you for having thus led me to the way of restoration, strength and vigor. Everything looks brighter; life offers more than I ever supposed it would, and nothing can be of more service to a weakened man than your priceless receipt."

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FREE TO WEAK MEN

A DISCOVERY OF A REMEDY HAS BEEN MADE THAT RESTORES LOST MANHOOD AND GIVES MAN THE VITALITY OF A LION.

ONE WEEK'S TRIAL PACKAGE SENT FREE TO ALL MEN WHO WRITE FOR IT.

Regenerative Tablets is the only recognized positive and permanent cure for Lost Manhood in all its forms and stages.

It is scientifically prepared by the best chemists in the world. The reputation of the institution is such, that all physicians know when they stand sponsor for a remedy, that remedy must be exactly as represented. And when upon their reputation they make the statement that Regenerative Tablets will cure all cases of Lost Manhood, Spermatorrhoea, Varicocele, or weakness of any nature of the nerve or sexual organs, a cure must be positive and permanent. This Company will send every person who is suffering from nervous diseases a week's treatment absolutely free. There is but one test of genuine medicine and that is the results which are obtained by its use; if it cures the disease for which it is prepared it is a true remedy. This is the test by which the Fallopia Lynn Co. wish their one week free treatment to be tried. After using Regenerative Tablets one week, the sufferer will find new vigor in his organs; new force in his muscles; new blood in his veins; new ambition; a new man in vitality, health and appearance. Regenerative Tablets has a peculiarly grateful effect and the patient feels the benefit after its first day's use. It goes direct to the seat of the trouble, no matter of how long standing, giving strength and development where it is needed. This marvelous remedy banishes all feelings of bashfulness toward the opposite sex; cures all the ills and troubles that come from early abuse, excess of overwork and business cares, all of which result in premature loss of strength and memory; emissions, impotency and varicocele. Regenerative Tablets will effect a cure at any age, there is no case that it will not cure permanently except where epilepsy or insanity has already been reached. Fallopia Lynn Co. makes no restrictions, every person who writes will be sent a week's treatment absolutely free and postpaid, carefully wrapped in a plain package with no advertising on it to indicate what it contains. They have received thousands of letters from people all over the country telling of the most astonishing cures made by Regenerative Tablets. Their one week free offer is genuine, and no embarrassing questions asked. Write to-day to the Fallopia Lynn Co., 523 Burlington Building, St. Louis, Mo., and receive the week's treatment free; their book which is also free and sent with the free treatment will explain how to take the treatment in private and cure yourself at home.

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her pathway, heading into the southwest, just as Merriwether would have wished, her tiller lashed, and the soft breeze filling her queer matting sails.

Julian spoke of the land which he was sure he had sighted just before the finding of the imprisoned mate, and Merriwether assured them that in all probability, judging from what he could gather about their course, and the rough reckoning taken by the young skipper, this must be the archipelago of which he had spoken, consisting of a number of small islands, serving as buffers to the larger one upon which the pirates had their nest.

If they kept straight on the chances were they could gain the shelter of these wooded islands, with their narrow and tortuous channels between, ere the coming of dawn betrayed their coming to keen eyes ever on the lookout upon the tower of observation used by the allies to spy out expected prey.

Of course, everything depended on the wind, which might prove fickle, and failing them utterly, bring about a state of affairs that would ruin their carefully laid plans. It would not be the first time that same want of a breeze had laid a vessel open to attack in these dangerous latitudes; and as Merriwether said, the ghastly ribs of many a brave craft whitened upon the sands of those same islands, while the crews had never been heard of again by those who waited anxiously in distant ports for news.

The ex-mate was in the midst of a description of the surroundings of the Hawk's Nest, as he called the collection of huts and tents forming the village of the sea-plunderers, when there came a shrill outcry that electrified each and every one in the cabin, so that there was a general scrambling to gain their feet, and Tressie clutched the arm of her protector, girl fashion.

There was something strangely familiar about the racket that caused Bob to throw up his hands and exclaim, dramatically:

"It's that old sinner, Kwang Chow, and he's got 'em again. Another devil has appeared to his vision, and this time perhaps it may be the genuine article," was what he spouted; but Julian began to have fears that it might be something of a more serious nature threatening them.

This thrilling story of youthful adventures in the far East will be continued next week. Our patterns and cameras are free to all subscribers. Please note our announcement on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Old, Old Story.

Once upon a time there was a lovesick frog who would a-wooing go; so he dusted off his green coat and proceeded to call on a giddy young frogess who dwelled in Puddleville. After swapping some small talk and exchanging weather views he finally got down to business and asked her to double up with him as his leading lady for the purpose of doing a life stunt on the continuous circuit.

"And what if I should refuse?" queried the tantalizing female, after the manner peculiar to her sex.

"Then, darling," replied his frogship, "there is nothing left for me to do but croak."

Moral—And so they were married and lived unhappily ever after.

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The patterns shown below are furnished us by one of the best, if not the best, pattern manufacturers in New York. They comprise the very latest styles, and are unequalled for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. They sell from the stores from twenty-five to fifty cents each. Full instructions are printed on every pattern. Three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 25 cents and any TWO of these patterns FREE. Six months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 50 cents and FIVE of these patterns FREE. This offer is without equal. If you are wise you will take advantage of it at once.

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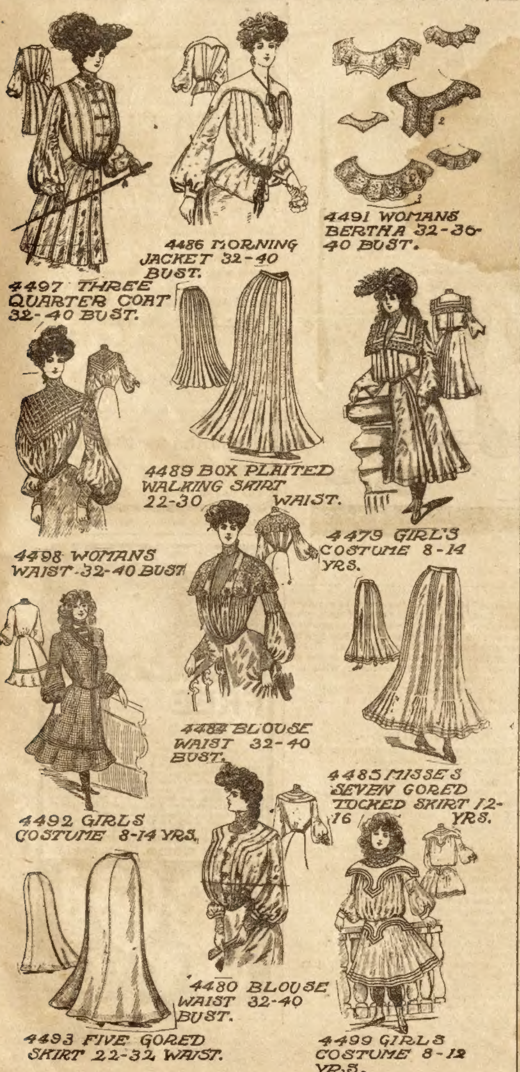
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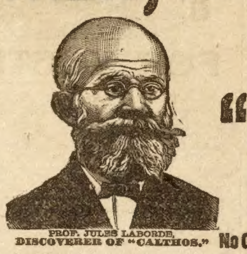
MEN; BE STRONG!



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The medical profession of this country seemed powerless to cope with the appalling and disastrous diseases and annoying weaknesses of men resulting from violation of Nature's laws.

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The Von Mohl Company, of Cincinnati, Ohio, recognizing the commercial value of Prof. Laborde's discovery, secured the sole American rights for "CALTHOS," and through its agency thousands of men who suffered from sexual diseases and enfeebling nervous maladies have been restored to health and perfect manhood.

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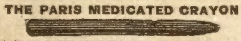

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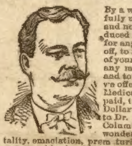

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

The Hill of Cellar-Door.

By Annie Willis McCullough.

I know a hill not far away
Where children always love to play;
The hill is straight, and smooth, and low—
For little folks 'tis better so.

The coasting there is very nice,
Without the cold of snow and ice;
You slide in summer, fall or spring,
But need no bother sleds to bring.

It is the safest hill I've found;
Sometimes you tumble to the ground,
But 'tis not far you have to fall,
And would not hurt a child at all.

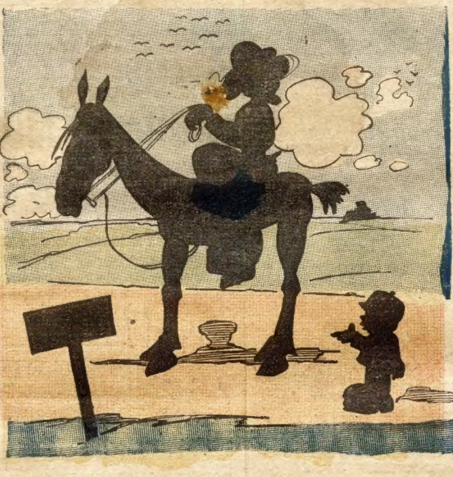
It's very near your home, and so
Your mother'll always let you go,
For then she knows you're right near by
And she can hear you if you cry.

So up you scramble, down you slide,
And oh, you have a jolly ride;
You always want to play some more
Upon the Hill of Cellar-Door.

Growing a New Grandma.

Harold was a dear little fellow only 3 years old. His parents had gone to a new country in the far West. It was very different from the city which they had left, with all the dear friends, relatives and, nearest of all, a dear old grandma.

Mamma had so much to attend to in the new home that she had little time for the children, excepting to keep them clean and give them their meals. Lonesome, indeed, they were, as mother discovered one day in a manner that brought tears to her eyes.



"Oh, dear, I'm afraid I've lost my way."
"Youse kin search me, lady, I ain't found it."

Harold had been very quiet and busy for some time digging a hole in the ground. He had been so earnest about it that, when it was completed, she went to examine the spot. There she discovered that he had buried a picture of his dear grandma.

"Why, Harold," she exclaimed, "what are you doing with this?"

"I thought," said the little man, with tears of loneliness streaming down his cheeks, "if I planted it maybe I could grow another grandma."

Her Kitten.

The Watchman tells the story of an odd contribution made to a regiment of Union soldiers by a loyal little citizen of the Republic. The army was encamped on a hillside near the Staunton River, in Virginia, when there came the cry, "Halt! Who goes there?"

Several of the more curious among those who heard ran to the guard line to find out what the trouble might be. Presently everybody knew that the intruder was no enemy. A little girl about 10 years old, holding a white kitten in her arms, came forward into the campfire light.

Two soldiers were conducting her with ceremonious courtesy. The men gathered about her to hear her story. Even the Colonel was among them.

She lived near by, she said, with her father, who was sick and poor. They were Northerners and "Union folks."

"I wanted to give you something," she concluded, "but I hadn't anything except my kitten."

So the kitten was formally presented, and the Colonel kissed its little donor, and made a gallant speech of thanks. Then the child, loaded with gifts, was escorted home.

The kitten stayed and became the pet of the regiment. It was the particular joy of the Colonel, and when the war was over the kitten went home with him.

Didn't Approve to the Feast.

The lesson was from the prodigal son, and the teacher was dwelling on the character of the elder brother.

"But amid all the rejoicings," he said, "there was one to whom the preparation of the feast brought no joy, to whom the prodigal's return gave no pleasure, but only bitterness; one who did not approve of the feast being held, and who had no wish to attend it. Now, can any of you tell who this was?"

A little boy finally vouchsafed this answer: "Please, sir, it was the fatted calf!"—Exchange.

Parental Economy.

"Papa," said Dickey, "all the other boys are going to have torpedoes or firecrackers for the Fourth of July. Can't I have anything at all?"

"Dickey," said Mr. Stinjey, beckoning mysteriously, "come with me and I'll show you something."

He took him out to the summer kitchen and showed him a large package, neatly folded, and tied with a string.

"There," he said, "are all the paper bags that have been brought into the house for a whole year, from grocery stores and other places. I have had your mother save them for you. Every one of them will make as much noise as a firecracker if you fill them with air and pop 'em right."

It was not exactly what Dickey had set his heart on, but it was all the "Fourth of July" he got.

A Musical Dispute.

"Those who haven't heard me warble,"
  Said the Pencil to the Slate,
"Have missed, in my opinion,
  A treat that's very great.
Some singers use their throats, I know,
  But that's not what I do;
I use my foot, and so I sing,
  When I walk over you."

"You're mistaken, Madame Pencil,"
  Cried the Slate, indignantly;
"The lovely notes which then arise
  Belong, of course, to me.
The song I sing is very fine,
  Of that there's not a doubt,
But credit isn't due to you,
  Who simply stroll about."

The Pen had heard them bickering,
  And it interposed like this:
"When Slate and Pencil squabble thus
  They act, I think, amiss.
You both of you produce those sounds
  Which no one can forget,
So do be sensible, my friends,
  And call it—a duet!"

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